Letters That Land Orders

LYTLE

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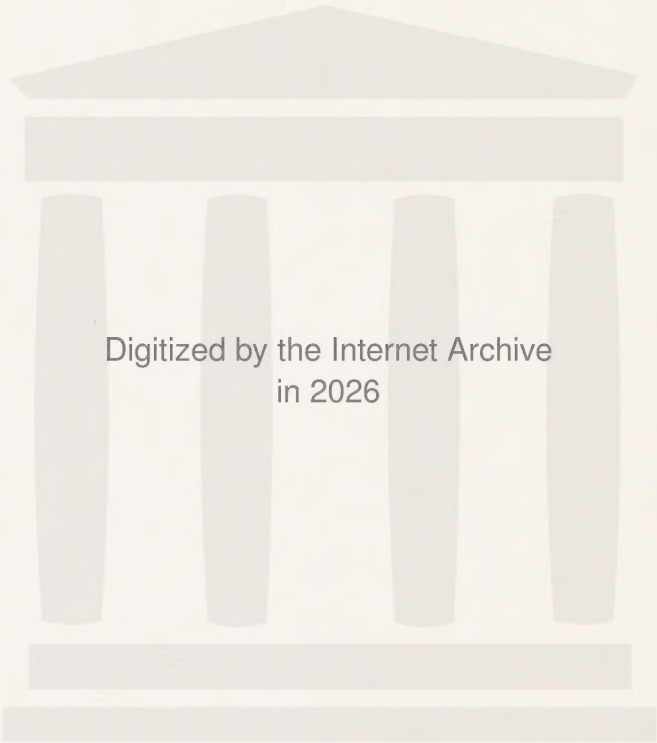
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LETTERS THAT LAND ORDERS

OR

HOW TO MAKE LETTERS SELL GOODS

By

JOHN HORACE LYTLE

Second Printing

NEW YORK
THE RONALD PRESS COMPANY
1914

Entered according to Act of Congress,
in the year 1911, by
JOHN HORACE LYTLE
DETROIT, MICH.
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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting this work to the public, it is my firm belief that it will be found of inestimable value. On May 15th, 1911, Mr. Hugh Chalmers wrote me: "There is no question but what there is need in this country for a book on successful Sales Letters or successful Business Letters."

The material for this book is taken directly from my files, and hence reports actualities. It is not merely a retrospective of theories. I have been paid a price for each letter in this book, and have only (in most cases) substituted fictitious firm names so that my clients will not be flooded with inquiries. The originals of any and all of these letters are on file at my office. The aggregate fees for the work here reproduced total many many times the selling price of the book.

I was led to believe that my method of instruction here followed would be the most forceful possible when it was explained to me how they teach Law at Harvard—by what they term the "Case System." That is, the students simply study the reports of actual cases, and from these develop their theories of the law. I have, however, in addition to the specimen letters, given the theory of successful letter writing quite exhaustively, even explaining before each specimen letter the principles involved, so that you have pointed out to you the "meat" you are expected to find in the samples submitted.

CHAPTER I.

Fundamental Principles of the Sales Letter.

When men first began to trade with one another, they were limited to dealings between friends and neighbors. But with the invention of printing, with facilities for travel and intercommunication, rapid strides were made which gradually developed the great science of Business. And as business activities spread outside of the community, it made necessary and gave birth to the Business Letter. But until the past few years the letter has never been fully appreciated by business men. Years ago the letter writer took great pride in his penmanship and his ability to say one thing in as many different ways, using as many different words and expressions, as possible. Nowadays, the best letter is the one that best gets directly to the point.

The one thing to be sure of is accuracy and clearness.

There are many kinds of letters—letters ordering goods; letters to collect accounts; letters to pacify irate customers; letters about miscellaneous matters, etc., but most important of all is the Sales Letter—the Letter that Lands an Order.

It is as a result of the power of letters that the great Mail Order Houses have come to be such a great factor in business today. Of late years, since people have begun to realize that it is a big, broad science to write letters that "pull," there has been considerable literature on the subject, and for this reason one must be careful not simply to put into new words ideas that have been voiced again and again.

As the subject, however, is a science, there must be certain underlying, fundamental rules governing the success of any letter writer. It

is in the application of these rules that there is the chance for difference, and so the readers of any literature on the subject of "letters that pull" must expect one treatise to differ from another only in the different ideas as to application of the generally accepted, fundamental rules—which are:

1. Attract attention,
2. Arouse interest,
3. Create desire,
4. Induce resolve.

Every successful letter in turn does these four things—although some writers, with a natural instinct for letter writing, may not by conscious effort adhere to these steps; and there may still be, possibly, some successful letter writers who have never classified the rules for their success.

Possibly no two of us would go about writing a letter in the same way; no two would agree on the same wording for the same points.

Since, however, the only object is results—orders—cash—the only proof of the best is by an actual test.

I have already given the four steps of procedure to be followed in the successful letter. Use your own style in building upon these lines. Your letters should have your style—breathe your very soul into your letters—make your reader feel your truth. Write as though you were looking your prospect directly in the eyes—see him in your imagination as he reads your letter point after point—think to yourself: "Will what I am saying attract enough attention to arouse interest? Will this arouse enough interest to create desire? If I have created desire, have I made ordering sufficiently simple and clear to induce resolve?"

Satisfied in your mind on the above points, make sure you have said neither too much nor too little. Rather indefinite, am I? Well, remember it is to be your letter. I mean, sim-

ply don't tire your reader by sentences whose omission would cost nothing of strength or force; and don't describe so briefly that your description is not clear and leaves only a hazy impression. Strike the happy medium.

You cannot write a good, strong, forceful, truthful letter if you do not feel in sympathy with your subject. Your subject, therefore, must actually be all that you claim for it. Never undertake to sell by mail (if you hope to be successful) anything that will not merit a repeat order.

One well known expert on letter writing says: "It is worth $5,000 to any man to know how to use the word 'you.'" What he means is this (and it is one of the things you must never lose sight of in your letters): that you must make the other fellow think he is to be benefited by the purchase. Make him feel that he should have what you offer at once—that delay is harming

him—costing him money. You, Mr. Writer, keep yourself—your interest—your gain—in the background, and when your prospect can wait no longer—when his desire is fanned to white heat—when he has resolved to possess—then you step in and say, "All right, yes, I can supply you at once."

How many firms start their letters, "We sell," "We make," "We want to interest you," etc.

How much more forceful is a letter that begins, "Have you ever thought," "You undoubtedly are aware," "Your success proves," "You know the value," etc. Make your reader think in the very beginning, "This proposition is for me." Keep any benefit that may accrue to you so far in the background that the reader will think only of the proposition as it affects him. This is the greatest secret of letter writing success.

We mortals are all naturally inclined to think first of ourselves and our own interests;

and thinking in the first person, most letter writers find it hard to write and keep self in the background. They don't seem to realize that almost any sentence of a letter can be just as easily worded so that the "*you*" will be prominent, to the exclusion of most of the "I" or "we." And when letters will be more forceful if so worded, isn't it time to take heed of the opportunity offered by a little reconstruction from the stereotyped forms so habitually used? Note the construction of the following letter, and that no paragraph begins with "We" until the sixth:

MR. J. J. SMITH,
Somewhere, Ohio.

Dear Sir:

Have you ever thought before leaving your business in the evening, "I wonder if those papers will be perfectly safe?"

They will be safe if filed in our steel devices, which are much stronger and more durable than wood, and won't burn. Even

though in a fire-proof building, if your filing is done in wooden devices, an interior blaze might rob you of many valuable papers.

You can save a great deal of space by using steel files. A certain firm recently switched from wood to steel, and the economy was one-third of the space formerly used for filing.

You will find a great satisfaction in using our goods, for since steel is not affected by climatic changes, there is never any shrink or swell. The working parts of our files, and the curtains on our roll top desks, will always respond readily to your touch, and will work the same one day as another.

You will find steel to be cleaner and more sanitary than wood, being dust, vermin and rodent proof.

We carry in stock, ready for immediate shipment, all manner of Filing Devices, Card Index Cases, Roll and Flat Top Desks, Transfer Boxes, etc., made entirely of steel.

May we send you our catalogue? Ask for No. 800.

Very truly yours,
THE FIREPROOF FURNITURE CO.

Have you ever thought of the force—the power—of a question? It often has more weight—carries more conviction—gains your desired end more quickly and completely—than a dozen argumentative paragraphs. As an example, if you are offering for sale steel filing devices, you could begin your letter by putting forth good arguments why your prospective customer should protect his papers by using your steel files which are fire-proof. But wouldn't your point strike home harder if you "hit him right between the eyes" in the first sentence with something like this: "Do you feel that your papers are just as safe as their value merits?" Use question marks—but use them judiciously and with care. When you have a very knotty problem of explanation or proof for the reader, see if you cannot sum it all up and make him convince himself by asking him a question. Personally, I put almost as much value on the ability to ask a judicious

question as on the ability to use the word "you."

After having, apparently with no avail, exhausted their stock of arguments on a prospect, the following list of questions, incorporated into a letter, produced splendid results for one firm:

Mr. J. J. SMITH,
Somewhere, Ohio.
Dear Sir:

Were you told that our cases are better than they need to be?

That other files are "good enough"?

Is it true?

If Steel—the best material—why not buy the best construction?

Why any Compressor but the one that stays locked where you place it?

Why not maximum fire resistance—each file in a complete compartment? (Also preventing papers "dropping down.")

If a lock, why not one that stays in order—even if the floor is uneven—and a locking knob that warns you at a glance if case is open?

Why not a Suspension that you KNOW will stand the unkind handling of an energetic clerk —one that works better the heavier the load— and makes no oil bills?

Why not a Suspension that operated 25,000 times, heavily loaded, without appreciable wear, when no other stood 5,000 operations?

Why not have the HIDDEN PARTS thoroughly enameled, to guard against rust, as well as the parts you can see?

Why not have the satisfaction of knowing that your case work was made by the makers of the most widely used metal cabinets?

Why not order today?

Yours truly,
THE FIREPROOF FURNITURE CO.

If the proposition you are trying to advertise is inexpensive, you must produce results with as little expense as possible; you cannot expect to spend the postage for many letters and make a profit. In this case you must strive to close the deal—get attention, arouse interest, create desire, induce resolve—all in one letter. If

your proposition is one involving considerable expense on the part of the purchaser, you must not expect to close with one letter. You will need a series of letters that will be educative, and possibly not intended to do more than accomplish the first two essentials, namely, attract attention and arouse interest. The interest aroused means a reply to your letter, and then it is up to you to fan the interest into desire, and induce resolve—meaning signed order—by your follow-up letters and literature, possibly by a call.

The above letter is such a one,—those requesting catalogs being visited at the earliest possible date by a salesman, while before and after the personal visit, if an order was not secured, personal follow-up letters were sent at different intervals.

I do not believe one firm in ten uses the most intelligent follow-up. It is to be taken for granted that the list of names you have been circularizing are all possible purchasers. The

possibility, then, of getting an order some day is never lost, though it may be months or even years.

This being true, why drop a prospect after a few futile attempts? Why not simply file a long time ahead, and keep this up indefinitely? Increase the length of the date ahead with each failure to get an order; but don't drop outright. By doing this you will have a long list of possible purchasers, all of whom you have had correspondence with—all of whom are familiar with your line—and some day, never fear, orders will result. The very fact of your not forgetting them will keep them from forgetting you when the inevitable day comes that they need your goods. You play on a fellow's vanity when you remember him and take pains with him—he likes it even if he does not "let on."

Never reply to an inquiry as though you were in a hurry and anxious to get the matter

off your hands. If you are not interested, your prospect will cease to be, and if you appear to neglect him, he will also neglect your proposition.

Use the bull's-eye method—that is, hammer in one point at a time. You are forced to do this if the article you are trying to sell requires much explanation, for you could not expect to tell all in the short space allowed by one letter. This being the case, overlook no opportunity to advance an argument for your goods. Make every follow-up letter contain a new argument. Don't let your follow-ups be merely reminders to the recipient that he has not ordered—he knows that; give him an entirely new reason why he should order.

Note how this is accomplished in the three following follow-ups:

LETTER NO. 1.

LUMBER & CO.,

Jonesville, Ark.

Gentlemen:

If your check book showed your payments to us for at least a certain per cent of the lumber you use to be less than you would have to pay anyone else for similar grade; and—

If your inspection of the stock would report the quality of the lumber equal to if not better than could be secured elsewhere—

Then wouldn't you be as anxious to give us your business (surely a trial order at least) as we are to be favored with it?

Well, the inclosed price list tells the story in regard to price; and you inspect the lumber before you pay for it, which surely will take care of the matter of quality.

Why not give us a trial order right now? Will you do it?

Yours very truly,

THE ELM LUMBER CO.

Letter No. 2.

Lumber & Co.,
Jonesville, Ark.

Gentlemen:

In our last letter we spoke of the price and quality of our lumber. Let us give you the why and the wherefore:

We travel no men, and in the price of the lumber give you the saving we make by having no hotel bills or railroad fare to pay—to say nothing of salaries. Stamps, stationery, and stenographic help cost very little in comparison. And by the way, our customers report that by correspondence direct with our headquarters their needs are much better taken care of than when transacted through salesmen.

Now that we have explained ourselves, may we prove our claims by shipping you a trial order? A price list is enclosed. You will find our rating in Dun's.

We shall await your early commands with interest.

Yours very truly,
The Elm Lumber Co.

Letter No. 3.

Lumber & Co.,
Jonesville, Ark.

Gentlemen:

Did you receive either or both of our former letters? Will you kindly advise in order that we may adjust our records, which do not show that a reply has been received?

In our last letter we made particular mention of how and why we can give you the best possible prices on lumber such as you use. We have also appealed to you for a trial order to prove the quality of our product.

You certainly must know that we could not possibly build up a lasting and successful business (and we're not short sighted) without giving you the best bargains in quality, as well as in price.

Suffice it to say, we are building for the future, and not alone for today. "Once a customer, always one"—that's our motto and aim. And we know as well as you do that we couldn't hope to get your regular business without satisfying you in every way with the stock

shipped. Isn't it logical? And remember, as stated in our first letter, you are fully protected, for you are not asked to pay until after the lumber passes your inspection.

Again we enclose a price list. May we not have the courtesy of a reply, and even a trial order for such stock as you are now in need of? Surely this is not asking too much, especially since you will be as well pleased with the result as ourselves.

Let's get together. It all remains with you, now that we have done all in our power to bring about a mutually pleasant and profitable connection.

Yours truly,
THE ELM LUMBER CO.

Never apologize to anyone for addressing them, nor write in an apologetic strain. If your product has real merit, you have a right to demand attention from anyone who ought to be interested.

The following weak letter (note in particu-

lar the opening paragraph) was actually being used by an Ohio firm, and they wondered why it did not pay:

COLD STORAGE MEN, EGG
& PRODUCE SHIPPERS.

Gentlemen:

We beg pardon for calling your attention to our improvements in cold storage egg case fillers.

The above cut illustrates our improved filler which has taken the place within the past year of our former filler; this has a double lock where other makes of fillers use but one. By this means the filler strips are held more firmly together and provided with more bracing strength and crushing resistance than other fillers of a given weight, thus not only reducing the quantity of checked eggs when in shipment but practically eliminating the time required to reconstruct disengaged strips which occurs during the period that the packer is rushed with work.

Write us for samples and allow us to figure

with you for your next season's supply of fillers.

We also handle standard cottonwood & gum cases, excelsior and cement coated nails. Remember that our prices will be in line with all manufacturers of first class goods.

Very truly yours,
THE GEM EGG CASE CO.

The same firm, however, were willing to pay for good copy after being told what it would do for them, and they report that the following letter "has proved a winner and has kept them on the jump":

JOHN SMITH & CO.,
Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen:

Don't crack so many eggs—

That's the aim of everyone in the egg business—and naturally so, for it is a vital matter of dollars and cents.

You can very greatly reduce such loss by using the right fillers.

There are many reasons why we can claim our fillers to be just what you want and need, but in this letter will confine our time and yours to the consideration of one essential feature.

It's largely due to the lock. In our fillers the strips are held substantially in perfect position by two locks. Long experience is back of our Double Lock Fillers, which are protected by patents.

See the cut of our fillers at the upper left-hand corner of this letterhead—the double lock holds the filler strips more firmly together, and gives more bracing strength and crushing resistance than other fillers of a given weight.

We are tempted to go on and tell you many more things about our fillers; about quality of straw board from which they are made; about the cotton wood and gum cases we handle; but you're mostly interested in the fillers themselves. Furthermore, you know enough about fillers to need no explanation if you see and handle one of ours; so listen—

Simply ask us to send you by express prepaid, samples of our fillers. They will go forward immediately. Could we back our goods

with stronger proof of our faith? Mail your request today. And remember, no obligation attaches. We've even enclosed an addressed envelope for your reply.

Yours for a prosperous New Year,
THE GEM EGG CASE CO.

P. S.—Our representative will call on you personally if desired. Quotations always gladly made by mail or wire.

CHAPTER II.

Handling the Live Prospect.

In reply to any letter asking a special question about your goods, always, besides as clear an explanation as you can give, of the point in question, explain some other point—throw in an extra argument.

Not long ago I wrote to a certain firm in regard to their product, and the answer to my question required only the giving of a dimension. The reply which came back simply acknowledged my letter, stated the number of inches, and ended then and there with "Yours truly." Could they have had a better opportunity to throw in "to boot" an argument or so that would convince me I must have their product? Wouldn't you, Mr. Reader, buy from the firm that took more pains?

It is astonishing how some firms—and many

of them in an apparently flourishing condition—so lack being alive to their every opportunity. This letter was sent to about a dozen firms in the Automatic Sprinkler business:

Gentlemen:

We are going to equip our entire plant with Automatic Sprinklers to give protection against fire, and especially to lower our insurance rate. All else being equal, the work will go to the lowest bidder. If installation of work of this character is in your line, please let us hear from you at the earliest date possible.

Yours very truly,

JONES & CO.

One firm replied as follows:

JONES & CO.,
Dayton, Ohio.

Gentlemen:

Referring to your esteemed favor of the 13th inst., would say that when you are in a position to take up the matter of Sprinkler Equipment, we shall be very much pleased to hear from you

and on receiving plans and specifications, will then advise you as to our ability on figuring for your contract.

Thanking you for bearing us in mind and awaiting your further advices, we remain,

Yours very truly,

THE JOHNS COMPANY.

It certainly should have been evident that the prospect was an exceedingly "hot" one, immediately in the market, and desirous of full details and particulars from competing firms who might wish to bid. Suffice it to say, one of the other firms got the contract.

Some time ago a large country club was being constructed, and a Metal Furniture company in the east was asked to submit plans and bid on construction of all steel lockers. Their Sales Manager replied that he did not believe the club realized what high class, expensive work was turned out by his firm, which he did not believe was what they were looking for,

and it would be hardly worth while to go to the expense of having one of their draughtsmen make up plans and specifications. The firm to whom the club later awarded the contract put in several thousand dollars worth of steel construction. It is the poorest kind of business policy not to treat every prospect as though a large order is at stake.

⁘ ⁘ ⁘

I believe that almost anything can be sold by mail if the selling plan is right and backed up by good copy. I know hundreds, yes thousands, of persons will take exception to the foregoing statement and try to prove me wrong. But I shall say to any such, that if they know of someone who has tried to sell a certain line of goods by mail and has failed, as sure as fate his plan of campaign, or else his selling copy, or both, were not what they should have been. Business men as a rule are very much like all the rest of us; and just because their fathers used to know of no other way of getting an

order than by calling in person upon the prospective customer, that is no sign that the man of today ought to be satisfied to let well enough alone.

With the postal laws being more rigidly enforced every year to protect against fraud, there is eliminated practically all argument against buying from printed salesmanship. I hardly believe there would be more than a very few persons who would not rather buy by mail than any other way, if they were just as sure to get exactly what they expect. Well, this being true, the proper course is to bend all efforts towards making such a condition possible. It can be done; it will be done; and, in fact, is gradually being done.

It would be almost out of the question for me to name all the persons who have come to me and asked if this or that could be sold by mail. My answer is invariably "Yes." It is sometimes necessary to spend some money before you get things swinging properly and on

the right track; but, since postage, stationery, stenographic help, etc., are much cheaper than hotel bills, railroad fare, and big salaries, you should eventually be doing business with minimum expense.

Some few years ago a firm located in an Ohio city took all their salesmen off the road, and they now sell their entire output of overalls and shirts direct by mail. They make the highest class goods in their line, and protect the buyer absolutely by offering to pay freight and drayage both ways on any shipment that does not meet with the entire approval of the customer, provided he makes his claim within five days from the arrival of the goods. They even solicit complaints, and by so doing win the confidence of all those to whom they sell. With such protection, the buyer cannot help but be convinced of the advisability of buying from this company. The firm makes a great cut in expenses by traveling no men, and they give the buyer the full benefit of this, both in the

price and quality of the goods. Why buy from a competitor, and help pay the salary, hotel bills, and railroad fare of their salesmen, when better goods can be bought for less money by mail?

Another firm in this city, manufacturers of grey iron castings, dies, and special machinery, travel no men whatever, and are building up a wonderful business that is growing rapidly each year.

The wonderful success of some mail order firms has, in one sense, been bad for the best interests of the business. Many misguided persons have been fleeced, after making them believe that anyone can get rich in the mail order business, working few hours, easy work, no capital, and then starting them on some project that is basically wrong. It is a shame that this condition has existed, but happily Uncle Sam is very rapidly making it impossible for the grafters to operate.

There is no such thing as " the Mail Order

Business"; but you can sell anything, from horse-shoes to golf sticks, by mail. It is a curious thing that so many people think "the mail order business" means some mysterious scheme for getting rich quickly, easily, and with no investment. I have often, when strangers have asked me about my business, simply replied, "I'm in the mail order business." "Oh," they say, "that's a great thing, isn't it?" The fact is, "mail order business" means nothing unless you tell what you are mail ordering. I know of one firm selling a combination hatchet by mail; another selling a new, patented, self-wringing mop; another selling a vacuum cleaner; another selling whiskey, etc., etc. But to simply say these firms are in "the mail order business" means nothing—they are selling their respective, definite, different lines by mail. I trust I make the point clear, and that in so doing I relieve the minds of many of my readers regarding the mail order business.

Not all articles can be sold by mail accord-

ing to the same plan of campaign. Take the staple line of Collars, for example. If you wish to introduce a new make, you might map out a national magazine publicity campaign to make the consumer inquire about your collars at his dealer's, and then force the dealer to put in your line, securing the orders with well written, powerful sales letters. Then you are in the mail order business selling collars.

One of the most popular selling plans for articles that are easily demonstrated and understood is through canvassing agents. This plan is becoming more popular all the time, for you make direct sales to agents who answer your "ads," and thus you can gauge the worth of the different mediums you are using. A national publicity campaign to interest the dealer through the consumer is always more or less of an uncertainty; one half of your mediums may pay you well, and the other half do you no good at all, and you have no way of knowing. I am interested in a firm selling entirely through

agents, and their records will show, almost to the penny, how much net profit has been made from each "ad," each month, in each magazine.

However, the general run of canvassing agents are a fickle lot, and so, to make a success in the agency business, you must have a new article or device, one that needs no explanation when in the hand, and that is of a nature to find ready sale in almost every household. Agents work on commission, and usually demand about 50% profit. It is absolutely essential that the seller make at least 50% profit himself. This is because you can only count on orders from about 10% of those who answer your "ads." If you get a higher percentage than this, you are lucky, and simply so much to the good.

The International Mfg. Co. have a splendid new "comfort idea" in their patented "Dayton Garter," and these have been sold almost entirely through canvassing agents. The fol-

lowing " ad " is used in the classified columns of newspapers and magazines:

AGENTS WANTED to sell new specialty for men. Every man a customer—demand created. Sells on sight—small cost—big profit. Write today for sample and territory. International Mfg. Co., Dayton, Ohio.

Then the inquiries received from the above " ad " get the following series of three letters, at intervals of two weeks apart, provided they have not answered the first letter:

MR. HENRY JONES,
Xenia, O.

Dear Sir:

Your inquiry in reference to our new " Dayton Garter " has been referred to the writer for his attention. Your territory is still open, and therefore we are able to make a most liberal proposition. You will find a complete description and illustration of " The Dayton Garter " in the enclosed booklet.

There are two points about this garter that will interest you.

In the first place, it is the Best Seller that any agent ever took hold of. It appeals to every man—from Bank President to the office boy with his first pair of socks—the moment you show a pair you will have a man's interest aroused. You don't need to talk when you show this article—it sells itself.

In the second place, it is the greatest Money Maker for agents that has ever been offered. Most firms give the agent a commission of 40% to 50%; we give you 100% commission on every sale. The selling price is 25c a pair or $3 per doz. pairs—costs you but $1.50 per doz. pairs, or less if you take advantage of the special quantity offers.

Even if you sold only 4 dozen pairs per day, you would make $6; that would be $180 a month, over $2,000 a year. You ought to do much better than that because after you get a few sold each customer will be so well pleased that he will be a continual booster for you.

We want an agent in your community, who

has ambition and energy capable of big things, one who is able to become a general agent having charge of many sub-agents. If you are that kind, you are the ONE we want. Do you want the place? If you do, order six dozen pairs today, and go to work before someone else gets ahead of you. Or if you want to see sample first, use the enclosed "Agents Sample Order Blank."

If you want to make money fast—if you want to sell an article that will please the purchaser and give perpetual satisfaction, you can't do better than to take the agency for "The Dayton Garter."

Don't wait. Your opportunity is before you. You never had such a chance to make money fast as you have now—think of it—Two Thousand One Hundred and Sixty Dollars per year, with the minimum amount of sales—can you afford to let this go to the other fellow? Just think—out of every $3 you take in $1.50 belongs to you!

Yours truly,

THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.

And this follow-up goes two weeks later if the first letter has not been answered:

MR. HENRY JONES,
Xenia, O.

Dear Sir:

Subject: "*Salesmanship.*"

Your letter has been on my desk two weeks. Immediately after answering it, Mr. James gave it to me and told me to hold your county as open territory, it being his opinion that you would take up the sale of the "Dayton Garter" at once after receiving his letter.

Now, although Mr. James has not said anything about it, I want to write you this letter as Sales Manager of this Company and give you a few thoughts from my experience as to why I believe it is to your advantage to come with us—to come now—that is, as soon as you finish reading this letter.

I have a few pointed questions for you:

If you had no doubt of your success, would you like to be with us?

Doesn't the fact that we have been in busi-

ness over fifteen years prove that at least most of our agents have succeeded?

Could we succeed without successful agents?

Doesn't the fact, therefore, that we want you, show that we are sure of your success?

Agents who do not make good are a loss to us, as we make no profit on first orders. What we want is workers—those who give us repeat orders.

Did you ever consider what a high calling it is to be a salesman? Of course, the first necessity of salesmanship is to have the goods —the right goods. Furthermore, since our goods are such that they practically sell themselves, it does not take an experienced man to market them; nevertheless, a mighty fine opportunity is offered to learn the principles of salesmanship.

Did you ever consider that the science of salesmanship is the foundation of all business? A prominent automobile manufacturer recently said, "The automobile supply has caught up with the demand. It is now necessary to SELL automobiles." What he meant was (and his success has proved that he was right) that there

are people who can buy automobiles who have not thought seriously of it. This manufacturer believed and demonstrated that by good salesmanship these people could be interested in machines.

The expert cook can make you want to eat when you are not in reality very hungry; the expert salesman can make you want to buy something that you had not thought very much about before. The art of salesmanship—or the science of salesmanship—is the most interesting phase of business. The successful salesman is about the highest-paid brain worker in the world.

Be a Salesman.

Let me be confidential—I am employed by this Company to be of assistance to our agents in selling our goods. If I fail to get results, I fail to earn my salary. But I have no intention of failing. This means that I am not going to let you fail, for if you fail, I fail. Mr. James has his eye constantly upon me for results, and I have my eye constantly upon the men on the road. I watch their work at each turn, and am ever on the lookout for openings

to help turn a sale. A long and successful experience fits me to do this. You can have the benefit of all this experience, and not only have it free, but make money for yourself at the same time.

A large school of salesmanship in Chicago offers a course for $50.00. I have studied all of the principles they teach. By taking up our work, you practically get the advantage of a $50.00 course of salesmanship, and what I teach you will be of more value than what you could get from a mere school, for instead of giving you theories, I tell you how to overcome actual difficulties as they arise in your own work. What you learn in this way you never forget. Just think—you will be learning salesmanship and at the same time making money! The headlines of a prominent advertisement read, " Don't merely look at big men; be one." This applies to you, Mr. Reader, but do not pay $50.00. Come with us; order your Complete Salesman's Outfit now—today—and make money while getting an experience worth a lifetime's study.

It occurs to me that possibly you might be

interested in knowing that the process of making a sale is the result of four successive steps. Anything which I may tell you later will be how to overcome difficulties that may arise in any of these four classifications:

1. Attract attention.
2. Arouse interest.
3. Create desire.
4. Induce resolve and get the order.

Now, I have written you at such length for one reason only—because I want you with us. Remember, I have guaranteed not to let you fail. You sometimes hear, "Salesmen are born and not made." I will admit that a fellow has to be born first, but nowadays salesmanship has been proved to be a science, and any science can be learned. You have already been born, and I will make you an expert salesman. What do you say? You need not hesitate to write me confidentially.

Very truly yours,
THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.
John Smith, Sales Mgr.

P. S. Since you may have mislaid the order blank sent you, I am having another one en-

closed. Please use this one and also the enclosed envelope to insure your letter reaching my desk.

And if neither of the first two letters get action, this third and final letter is sent:

MR. HENRY JONES,
Xenia, O.
Dear Sir:

We want to talk Dollars and Cents to you. You were interested enough in our advertisement to ask about the proposition, but you have not replied to our letter of May 25th. We want to know why. You get a liberal commission and an article that can't be gotten in any store in the country, and for which a demand already exists. Perhaps you don't know it, but last year the garter sales in this country reached the NINE MILLION DOLLAR MARK. A lot of money, did you say?—Of course it is, and it proves what we told you in our last letter to you (copy enclosed), that the agent selling a good garter has the right line and is in a position to make money and lots of it. This is your chance to get your share of that Nine Million.

True—your profit on one pair of the garters is small, but when you take into consideration that you can sell a good 25c article in less time and land a greater percentage of prospects than with a $2.00 or $3.00 article, you see that you can make more money than with the latter. For example, with a $3.00 article which gives you a profit of $1.50 you will have to spend on an average 20 minutes with each prospect, and then you can't average over 1 out of 15 sure sales; taking in all 300 minutes for you to make $1.50. While, if you are selling an article like "The Dayton Garter" for $3.00 per dozen with a profit of $1.50, you can't spend over 10 minutes with a prospect—win or lose—and you can average 12 sales out of 15 interviews; thus giving you the same profit in one half the time. Make us prove this by ordering a dozen and test out the selling value, subject to the guarantee of Satisfaction or Money Back.

In our first letter we made you a special offer of 6 dozen for $8.50, because we believe that you should have that many to have a day's work; but you of course understand that you can have the agency even if you want to start

out with just one dozen for $1.50. Enclosed you will find an addressed envelope, so you can write and tell what you think about the agency.—We are waiting for your reply,

Respectfully,

THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.

Those that do not answer any of these letters are then dropped as "dead"; but the *real prospects* who answer—whether just for more information, or with an order—are followed up indefinitely at varying intervals. Of course, those who become active agents get special attention. The following form is sent two weeks after the initial order to those agents who have not re-ordered:

MR. HENRY JONES,
Xenia, O.

Dear Sir:

How are sales coming for you?

You know we are extremely anxious for your success, and we are determined that you SHALL succeed. We are going to let abso-

lutely nothing remain undone that would boost you along.

I said in my first letter to you that, if you show the proper spirit, I simply will not let you fail. And I won't. I HATE that word "failure." I want YOU to hate it, too; and I'll stand shoulder to shoulder with you and fight it to the last ditch—if you'll let me. I just glory in such a fight, because I LIKE TO WIN—and so do YOU.

Don't you know that in this great, broad, wonderful life we live, every opportunity means a fight, and the glory of life is in the exhilaration of victory? And don't you know, too, that in every fight there is one crucial point—a point where, if you hesitate an instant, all is lost; or, if you strike strong with courage, everything is won?

Are you at that point today with your samples? I hope you are, and I would bet a new pair of Dayton Garters that you come out on top—that is, if I have not overestimated your courage and strength of purpose. And I don't believe I have done that.

You see, eleven out of every twelve I pick

to represent my company make a big success. That's why I can't believe I should have been mistaken in you, and it's why I am so anxious to hear about your work.

I wish you could come into my office for a personal talk of even a half hour. I find a great deal of solid satisfaction and mutual help in meeting our representatives face to face in a frank talk about the details of this business. I am confident that I could discover and overcome any difficulty you may have encountered; and, if I should show you some of the splendid results achieved by our salesmen in all parts of the country, you would realize as never before the wonderful possibilities of your new position.

But, inasmuch as you can't come here just now, write me all about what you have done. I expect a great deal from you in that territory. I want you to WIN, and—well, you won't disappoint me, will you?

Yours for success,

THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.,
John Smith, Sales Mgr.

CHAPTER III.

The Personal Application.

A WHOLESALE lumber dealer told me that hardwood lumber could not be sold by mail—he said you had to "know" your customer. "Very well," I told him, "get to KNOW him by mail." "Can't," he said, "I've tried, and it won't work."

He showed me his letters, and I could see immediately what was wrong: he simply wrote to a lot of firms telling them he "could furnish the following lumber at the following prices." What he needed to do was to have a heart-to-heart talk with all his possible purchasers before quoting at all—to get to KNOW his customers, and let them know him—which he could do just as well by mail (for all business purposes) as by personal call. (In fact, just think what a wonderful thing are truly strong letters for the fellow who does not possess an

attractive personal appearance.) The trouble is, the average man doesn't know what a letter really can do if given the chance; and consequently, he utterly ignores the great business opportunity it offers, merely using it haphazardly, and only on occasions when no other means presents.

The lumber dealer was right, that you must get to KNOW your customers before you gain their confidence and their business; but he was wrong in supposing this could not be accomplished by mail.

I wrote the following letter for him, and its remarkable success proves the point I have made to be well taken. Before he had spent $20 sending out this letter, he developed over $700 worth of business as a result.

THE BROWN BROS. CO.,
Tonawanda, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

You'll find it to advantage for me to tell you in the first letter who I am and what I have to offer.

After being in the Lumber business for a number of years, connected with a firm with whose name you are familiar, I have decided to embark for myself. I travel no men, believing that your interests can better be taken care of direct with the office by correspondence; and postage, stationery, and stenographic help cost much less than hotel bills, railway fare, and the salary of high class salesmen. The saving thus effected I give you the benefit of in the price of the lumber.

AS TO QUALITY—well, suffice it to say that I am building for tomorrow as well as today. I know full well that only by keeping up the quality of the lumber, even while reducing the price, can I hope for your continued business. And it's your continued business I want. Point granted, may I have a chance?

PRICE GOES DOWN; QUALITY KEEPS UP.

On the above grounds only, I solicit a share of your business. You can prove my first claim by referring to the price list enclosed. And as to the second—well, you inspect the lumber before you pay for it.

I shall expect to hear from you with at least a trial order. I am even enclosing for your convenience an addressed, stamped envelope.

Yours very truly,

J. R. KINNARD.

✣ ✣ ✣

A certain Boiler Compound company called me in to analyze their proposition. They were skeptical—and rightly so—about being able to sell Boiler Compound by mail, for the reason that usually this is sold by getting on the ground and "buying," or in some manner gaining, the influence of the engineer to be brought to bear in your behalf. But again it was proved that letters *can* be used as actual business getters, for the following series of three letters sold Boiler Compound (an article thought prohib-

itive for mail sales) in great and most highly satisfactory quantities. I have thought it would be of both interest and benefit to my readers for me to also here reproduce the letter I wrote accompanying the submission of the copy:

MR. WILLIAM BLANK, Sec'y
The Blank Boiler Compound Co.,
Blankville, O.

Dear Sir:

I am pleased to hand you herewith copy for three letters that I have prepared, and which I take pleasure in submitting to you.

In the preparation of this copy I have remembered that Boiler Compound is a hard article to sell, and it has been my endeavor to give you letters that will get down under the crust of usual indifference and actually land orders for you.

As per conversation with you, I believe three letters will give you every opportunity to weed out your actual prospects. The last letter especially is written with this end in view—to make them say something; then you can with

special letters follow up the real prospects indefinitely, and eliminate entirely any expense on the positively hopeless ones.

With your first letter I recommend enclosing the two folders you have given me, and which I herewith return; also enclose a price list, which you are the ones to prepare.

With second letter send a neat reproduction of the letter from the Chemical Laboratory of the University of R——; and also with this letter the same price list as in first letter.

With third letter send only a STAMPED AND ADDRESSED return envelope.

It is my firm belief, based on results of similar work done for others, and on all the laws of averages, that the first two letters will bring you many direct orders, along with a number of inquiries that you can develop into orders; and most positively the third and last letter will give you many returns—good, bad, and indifferent—a fair proportion resulting in some business, and the balance giving you a chance to save further expense.

Wishing you success and awaiting your further commands, I am

Yours very truly,

J. H. LYTLE.

FIRST LETTER.

Gentlemen:

Your saving will be anywhere from 15% upwards in fuel bills, if your boilers are absolutely free from scale.

Scale is practically a non-conductor of heat, being as 1 to 37 compared to iron in this respect. Thus, if there is scale in your boilers, your waste in fuel will be according to the thickness of the scale.

The water that does not leave a deposit of some kind when raised to the temperature of steam under pressure does not exist for power plant use, and the inevitable result is the formation of scale on the tubes and plates of the boiler shell.

Properly using the best Boiler Compound is the surest and also the cheapest way of protecting your boilers from scale. Our Boiler Compound will not only remove what scale

may have formed, but will also keep the water soft and prevent further scale forming matter from getting into the boiler.

Mr. John Smith, Chief Engineer of a big plant in this city, has written us as follows: "I am sending you pieces of scale as large as my hand which were removed by Blank Boiler Compound. It is now one year since I began using your compound, and I must say that I prefer it to any other compound I have ever used."

Hundreds of similar testimonials in our files indicate a like good feeling on the part of many customers. But the continuous repeat orders that invariably follow every trial shipment are really our very best testimonials.

Look over the enclosed price list, and let us have at least a trial order—then you are sure to soon feel as Mr. Smith does. Call your stenographer now while you think of it.

Yours very truly,

BLANK BOILER COMPOUND CO.

SECOND LETTER.

Gentlemen:

If your boilers are absolutely free from scale, you have a right to believe that you are safe from the possibility of a sudden collapse, explosion, or the necessity of a shut-down for repairs. With scale in your boilers, you are never safe.

Thus it means both time and money to you to be assured that this important feature is properly cared for. In our former letter, we brought to your attention our Blank Boiler Compound, which offers the best safeguard you could have.

Enclosed find copy of the letter we have received from Mr. S. A. Brown of the University of Blank. You should use a compound that has no ill effects on boiler, packing, valves, or otherwise. Ours will even preserve the iron, and will prevent corrosion and pitting of any nature.

We guarantee satisfaction or make no charge—give 30 days trial. Same price list as sent with our former letter is herewith enclosed. A trial order will guarantee us your

continued business—we are quite positive of this, and hence await with great interest the courtesy of your early reply.

Yours very truly,
BLANK BOILER COMPOUND CO.

THIRD LETTER.

Gentlemen:

Under the respective dates of ———— and ———— we mailed to your address two very important communications regarding Blank Boiler Compound. Did either, or neither, of these letters reach you? Will you please use the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope and advise us by return mail?

Yours respectfully,
BLANK BOILER COMPOUND CO.

⁂

Right here I take occasion to say that I do not want it thought that I am not appreciative of the value—and in many cases the necessity—of the personal salesman. But the trend of modern business is towards doing as much business by letter as possible, and the

salesman must fall in line. There will probably always be, however, the place for the salesman.

But I do take the stand that many houses send salesmen where letters could be just as advantageously used. The reason this is true is because so many business men write such poor letters (because they have not given proper thought and study to them), and never having gone about securing mail orders in the proper way, they are not aware of possibilities in this direction. Even in those businesses where it is found that salesmen are essential, letters can be very effectively used between calls. Such letters keep you before your customers between the salesman's visits, and thus often will save many orders. Some firms send these letters from the home office, and some have their salesmen send letters direct at regular intervals to show the trade that they are BEING KEPT IN MIND.

One reason why some firms do not get better results from their correspondence is because the dictator does not make himself clear. I have seen hundreds of letters where the recipients were not able to make head or tail out of them. Learn to express yourself well—above all, be clear. Recently I wrote a certain firm to inquire if their classified "ad" was paying, and here is the letter I received in reply:

Dear Sir:

We are in receipt of your esteemed favor of the 13th inst. and would respectfully inform you in strict confidence that we are very much disappointed with results so far, coming through our attractive advertisement in the magazine you mention. Not only that no orders have resulted, but the only letters which we received so far in answer to that ad, are from people who desire advertisements in their own publication. We know that advertising is always more or less a lottery, but in view of the undoubtedly large circulation, we had every reason to expect that at least some genuine in-

quiries would come to us, resulting in little success, so that our money for the ad. is not wasted, but half the month is gone and we have little hope of our advertisement proving a success.

Yours very respectfully,

THE BESSING COMPANY.

The above letter, reconstructed according to my style, would be as follows:

Dear Sir:

Replying to your letter of the 13th inst., we inform you in strict confidence that we are much disappointed with the results so far secured from the advertisement you mention. No orders have resulted; and the only letters we have received are from people who desire us to advertise in their mediums. All this is a great disappointment to us, as we felt we had every reason to expect our ad. to meet with great success.

Yours very truly,

✣ ✣ ✣

Don't say anything in your letters that does not have direct bearing on the goods you are

trying to sell, or on the value of said goods to the customer. I know there are many who suppose the good letter writer is the fellow who can say something very clever. Nothing could be further from the real truth. Never attract a prospect's attention to anything but your goods. If you can say something " clever " that leaves only the memory of the goods driven home by the clever argument, then all well and good. But abstract cleverness, even though it attracts great attention, if the attention is not confined to the article you are trying to sell, is wasted effort.

Here is a letter with which I circularized a number of advertisers some time ago, when I was soliciting them to prepare their copy:

Dear Sir:

Beware lest your " ads " and sales letters are considered clever. Avoid cleverness!

Let your prospect remember that you wrote him something exceptionally clever, and he'll

remember your cleverness—forgetting that your message had another mission.

You'll not get dollars by cleverness—you can by force, logic, and truth. Don't be "fancy" with Business Men—get down to "brass tacks." FORCE is all we claim for the kind of copy we write—but on the ground of the power to pull dollars we solicit your business.

General results—and especially your direct mail sales—will be greatly enhanced by a plan we even now have in mind for you. Would you care for the details?

Simply use our addressed envelope when replying, and at the same time enclose 25c in stamps (or any other form) for the booklet mentioned in the enclosed circular—then we'll write you fully.

Yours for $ucce$$ful results,
THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

* * *

Almost always a sale is pretty hard to close; but I believe it is true that almost anyone who could or should use your goods *can* be sold if

you find the right point of contact. That point of contact—the approach—how to get down under the crust of indifference—is what we must all try to find when making a sale.

It is simply the way to approach a given party best to get his undivided attention—accomplish this, and his interest will follow if your proposition has merit. Specific points of contact cannot easily be used in form letters, but special dictation offers more advantages. One firm shows customers that it has their trade at heart by blue penciling especially certain items on enclosures, price lists, etc. This gives a real personal touch to form letters, and is of great value.

And a personal touch is what you must strive for in your form letters. If you send a form letter to five or ten thousand names, it must be your aim to make each one think he is getting a special letter addressed just to him. I know that some people will claim that you cannot match a multigraphed letter on a typewriter.

But I know it can be done. I have seen multigraphed letters with name, address, and salutation filled in so perfectly on a typewriter that I would defy anyone to detect the fact that the letter was not typewritten throughout. I have put out thousands of letters for myself, and for firms for whom I have done work, and I have seen letters matched so perfectly as to deceive me. Expert typists can effect perfect match of fill-ins by gauging their touch to correspond with the multigraphing. Of course, the most important factor is the ribbon—have a new one for heavy work, and an old one for light matching; but I have known operators to become so expert that they could match even a light letter with a new ribbon, and vice versa.

If employers will only appreciate how vitally important it is to match form letters perfectly, and then for this work hire only high class, thoroughly reliable typists, who will appreciate that no work performed on the typewriter is more important than theirs, if they will but de-

velop speed in expert matching, much of the usual deadly waste from poorly matched letters will be done away with. Much of the blame for poor matching of form letters, in cases coming to my attention, can be laid right at the door of the employer, for not himself appreciating the importance of this item, and consequently hiring help who will not appreciate it.

CHAPTER IV.

Enclosures and Postage.

It is often a question as to what enclosures to send with form letters. Do not send so much reading matter to the busy business man that he will become disgusted and throw the whole thing away. Try to get at the vitals of your proposition and send only such absolutely necessary enclosures as pertain thereto. At the same time, don't send less than is required to let the reader thoroughly understand what you have. Proofs—testimonials—are always of value; but don't send too many, or the reader will think you've sent him all you have. It's better to send only one, or a few, and give him to understand there are many more of a similar nature in your files.

It is not always well to send important enclosures under separate cover, for they may not get attention at the same time as the letter,

and this destroys the chain. Of course, as in all rules, there are exceptions to this. A catalog, for instance, must usually be sent under separate cover.

But though a Busy Man's letter should not be loaded down with enclosures, the man who gets but little mail usually relishes all he can get in this line. In this class, with few exceptions, would be: (1) Farmers, (2) Women, (3) Canvassing agents, (4) Children. It is often very advantageous to enclose a printed return envelope; and a handy order blank is often essential.

How to make sure that all the proper enclosures would unfailingly be put in every letter in the mailing department was the problem that confronted a firm with which I was connected. One of the most popular methods seems to be to paste on each letter a small sticker on which is printed "ENCLOSURE." This plan is all very well for the ordinary business where there are in any event few enclosures, and usually

only one when there is any at all. But this would not work at all in the business of which I speak, and so we developed the following plan, which has worked out phenomenally well, and which I am sure can be used most satisfactorily in any business.

We got up a set of abbreviations for every possible enclosure we ever had occasion to use. Each stenographer was given a copy of these, as was also the dictator. The dictator dictates the enclosures he desires to go with each letter, and it is the duty of the stenographer to indicate the abbreviations of these on the bottom of the letter just under her initials and those of the dictator, in this manner:

Yours very truly,

JHL/L THE JOHN JONES COMPANY.

Enclose

Ret. Env.

Gart. Circ.

T. K. Circ.

The above illustration would tell the mailing girl to enclose an addressed return envelope; a

"Dayton" Garter Circular; and a Tool Kit Circular.

The great advantage of this system is that it is not necessary for the girl in the mailing department to read over the whole letter carefully to find out the proper enclosures, as she surely must do in the case of using almost any of the other systems that have come within my notice. I do not believe any system will work out all right in actual practice where the girl in the mailing department positively must read over the whole letter carefully if she would get the right enclosures in every letter every time.

And we have a check on this system so that we know at any time whether or not the clerk is following the enclosure indications and not shirking her duty. She must make a little check mark opposite the abbreviation as she makes each enclosure, on the carbon copy of the letter, and this will tell at any time that the enclosures indicated have been sent. A clerk would really have nothing to gain by checking

the enclosure abbreviations and not making the enclosures themselves, for the one act is as much trouble as the two. And of course, if this were being done, we would soon find it out by complaints from those to whom we have been writing.

The item of postage is also a most important one. Often more than half the expense of a letter is in the stamp. It means a good deal, then, to know whether 1c postage will rival the red stamp in results. I believe there is no sure way but an actual test. I have known high authorities who say you must use 2c postage; and then again others, equally renowned, dispute this claim. Certainly you can seldom reach a business man with less than a two-cent stamp —though there are instances of its having been done. Possibly one of the greatest reasons why letters under one-cent postage fail to get proper returns is because, hand in hand with the use of the cheaper rate of postage, the tendency is to cheapen also the whole thing, sta-

tionery, printing, and all. The chances are that if a one-cent stamp carries a message of real importance, and the letter is well put up, it will find the attention of those addressed.

Some few years ago a prominent manufacturer wished to test the relative value of one-cent and two-cent postage, and he sent five hundred letters under one-cent stamps to a list of merchants. The letters purported a desire to buy the merchant's product, and answers were received from all but one of those addressed. So it would seem that it is the inside appearance and merit of the message carried, and not so much the amount of postage that carries the message, that really counts.

If you are going to circularize a list of names, try out 500 or 1,000 with two-cent postage, and another 500 or 1,000 with one-cent postage, and check carefully the keyed results. Then if you find that the one-cent letters compete favorably, you can cut your postage expense in half in sending out the balance.

Now, I am very far from attempting here to advocate postage of either denomination. I simply say, each individual case must be treated individually; and no one should ever attempt to send out a large batch of form letters without having first made careful tests with the postage. Stamps run into money quicker than anything else pertaining to letters, and it is impossible to devote too much attention to this point.

I have never thought it well to furnish postage for the reply. If you make your message sufficiently attractive, the reader will be only too anxious to answer. Take a little extra pains with your letter, and save your postage, letting the other fellow use his.

We are all continually surmising as to savings in postage. It is quite universally granted that it takes a two-cent stamp to reach the busy business man. It is likewise quite sure that a one-cent stamp will reach the farmer who doesn't get much mail. Knowing such things as this is a great thing—it saves thousands upon

thousands of dollars in postage. We are becoming more and more sure of what to do and what not to do. However, we all have lots to learn still, and a little test of mine may be of interest to many readers. Just think of what can be lost by an injudicious waste of postage, or what can be saved by elimination of waste. For instance, if you should send out a hundred thousand letters under two-cent postage, where one-cent would have given equal results, you have wasted one cent on each letter, or a total of $1,000.

I recently circularized a list of 500 names and enclosed an addressed post-card for reply. There was only one quotation in my solicitation—I wanted those to whom I addressed letters to request quotations. On the post-cards that went with 250 I put a one-cent stamp, and the other 250 I did not stamp at all. However, I put a little check mark with my pen on each of the 250 that I did not stamp, so that I

could assort the replies—those where I paid the postage from those I did not.

Now, a rather unusual result followed. I did not get so very many more replies where I paid the postage, and the difference was merely in those who marked "not interested" across the card and returned it. I kept a careful tab of results, and have made no sales to those who replied at my expense. I have paid for the cost of the 500 letters and made a nice profit besides out of the replies where the recipient of the letter paid the postage on the reply card.

It only goes to show that if you have a proposition that should interest those to whom you write, and tell it in such a way as to interest them and arouse their desire for what you have, you will get replies, and the replies will result in orders.

I well know that the great amount of literature that is written nowadays on the subject tends to recommend that the sender of the letter do it all—even sign the other fellow's name

to the reply postal, as well as stamp it. To my mind, you have to do a great deal to make reply easy—you must do almost all; but if you leave absolutely nothing to be done by your prospective buyer, how does the fact that your addressed, signed, and stamped post-card comes back to you indicate any interest or desire on the part of the person returning it, in what you have to offer? Oblige the recipient of your letter—your prospective buyer—to make some little effort on his part, no matter how little, whether it be merely signing his name or using a one-cent stamp. Such replies will be pretty sure to pay you.

When your solicitation quotes direct so that the reply will bring money, of course you will do well to make it easy for your customer to send the money. In this case you force the customer to action (sending the money), and should make it easy for him. But suppose your letter does not quote (or is not of such a nature as to close the deal with one letter).

Don't you very likely waste a stamp by putting one on a return envelope?—especially if the letter produces the right effect, for then he will be glad to furnish the stamp. Catch my point? I do not mean to confine myself to stamps—anything which makes the replies to your letters prove that you have at least attracted the prospect's attention and aroused his interest is all that is necessary; then you are safe in going ahead. You may furnish the stamp, but cause the reply of the prospect to prove his interest in some other way. No set rule applies (I am merely giving my experiences) and your case may need other attention—it is all part of the great game. We all play for success, and it is only by studying out each separate case with the deepest insight and making careful tests that we arrive at what will actually pay.

Following is the actual letter and post-card mentioned above:

E. H. JAMES MFG. CO.,
Kansas City, Mo.

Gentlemen:

Your problem is:

"Who should buy?"
"Who will buy?"
"Who can buy?"

The mere signing of the enclosed stamped post-card may put you in the way of "prospects" you had not chanced to think of before. I have many lists.

How would you like to address personally 600 Railroad Purchasing Agents—to be able to call each by name? Couldn't you sell them? This list would cost you $5 neatly typewritten and listed alphabetically according to the Railroad names.

Sign the card or write today—now.

Very truly yours,

J. H. LYTLE.

This is the post-card that was enclosed with the foregoing letter:

Date .....

Dear Sir:

Can you furnish us a mailing list of the following:

.....?

How many on the list? What would the list cost? Would the arrangement be Alphabetical or Geographical? Will you suggest other lists that appeal to you for our business?

Yours truly,

Name .....

Address .....

Remarks: .....

But, as always, there are exceptions to all rules. The Kinnard letter, shown on page 55, was found by actual test to bring more replies and orders than when the return postage was omitted. I have tried to steer clear of hard and fast rules, and merely awaken a train of thought in the minds of my readers. Remember, you can't afford not to make careful tests with postage before going ahead. I sent 2,000

letters under one-cent postage that proved an utter failure. The same letter gave good results with two-cent stamps.

CHAPTER V.

The Follow-up File.

It has already been stated that there are four steps necessary to make a sale. In most cases the first two can be most advantageously accomplished by magazine or newspaper advertising. With "ads" you can usually tell your story to about twenty times as many people as you could reach with letters for the same amount of money. Thus it is generally the best plan, if you are selling something that appeals to the masses, to *attract attention* and *arouse interest* by means of advertising, and follow this up to an order by means of letters. If you wish to reach special classes, and no adaptable class publication offers itself, of course you must depend upon letters for everything. Segler & Co. neither advertise nor travel salesmen—letters, and letters only, are the medium by which

they market their entire splendid line of overalls and working shirts.

The matter of expense, in view of ultimate possibilities, must always be thought of in connection with doing business by letter. If your proposition is a legitimate one, and your selling plan and copy are right, you should figure whether or not you can make money by developing 10% returns. If not, your success is doubtful. Although I have known of letters bringing a much higher percentage than this, nevertheless it cannot be counted on, and 10% is the proper reckoning basis. According to the nature of the proposition, replies from advertising will cost anywhere from five cents each up to one dollar. This knowledge, after you're sure you have a good article, plan, and selling copy, will enable anyone to arrive at a fairly definite conclusion as to whether or not he can hope for success. And again I say, "There are exceptions to all rules."

The number of follow-ups to use must be

largely based upon the price of the article offered for sale, and the profit that will accrue from each sale. I have seen many firms use almost endless follow-ups, and others who use very few. Personally, I think you should tell your story, and then make the prospect tell what his resulting views are, which will give you the point of contact for subsequent special follows.

One firm uses a telegram as its only follow-up. Night letters offer quite an opportunity in this line. In any case, I usually try to make three or four form letters weed out all the real prospects—these I put on perpetual follow-ups, and drop the dead ones altogether.

⁘ ⁘ ⁘

In filing your correspondence, always use vertical files. If your business is mostly local, it is usually best to file just alphabetically according to firm name. Alphabetical guide cards can be furnished from 25 up to over 100 in a set, which offers plenty of subdivisions to

render easy reference. Too many subdivisions of the index make it susceptible to errors.

Geographical filing is by far the most satisfactory for any business that is not confined to given territory. By this plan, your chief guide card is the State. Any filing cabinet firm will furnish a set of geographical guide cards; or it may be well to have the outside drawer cards in your cabinet record the state or states in the drawer. If in a certain state you have very little correspondence, you can file your letters (in a folder if you desire) immediately back of the state guide card. In other states an alphabetical index in addition to the state guide card will give sufficiently ready access. Large cities will often require a separate guide card, and often a supplementary alphabetical index if the city is very large. States can even be subdivided into counties, if in certain cases this would give readier access. Geographical filing —with the alphabetical assistance for sub-headings—offers the most expansive system in exist-

ence. The system will expand to give almost instantaneous reference to correspondence, no matter how great the volume. In some businesses it is advantageous to file according to subject. In this case, the subject guide cards take the place of the state guides in geographical filing. In the railroad business filing according to subject treated is very popular.

For the special follow-up file, have a set of date cards—the twelve months, and the necessary number of day cards in front of each month. A 5″x3″ card index usually is the best follow-up file; and on the follow-up card put only such information as may be necessary in aiding you to find the correspondence in the letter file. *On the correspondence you should mark the date in the follow-up file where the card is to be found.* Thus, if a letter from the prospect or customer gives reference to the correspondence on file, the correspondence will in turn give reference to the follow-up card, and allow it to be found and filed ahead, or destroyed. And

if nothing is heard from the party, the follow-up card will on the proper date bring up the correspondence for attention. I have seen other systems, but this is the finest that has ever come to my attention.

CHAPTER VI.

Paragraphs and Punctuation.

As I have stated a number of times in this book, one of the greatest essentials of a letter is to be clear and specific; and especially in the case of a sales letter, the easier it is to read, the more likely it is to produce results. Outside of the proper psychological construction of the letter, there is nothing that will tend to make it easy to read like the proper punctuation.

You should make paragraphs at points of natural cleavage; prefer the short sentence; choose your word with discrimination; admit not one that is unnecessary; punctuate and capitalize for development of meaning alone, and not for display.

Business letters vary. They range from the bald formula adequate for the ordering of goods to that more elaborate epistle intended to influence men to certain courses of action. On

the proper wording of such a letter may hang great commercial interests; and he who is able to write it fitly, not only in the style generally appropriate to the occasion, but with some individuality, may be the master of the field. It is then worth while to give heed to style. Style cannot be taught or learned as a task. It can be slowly evolved from one's-self.

The Paragraph.

Written matter should be divided into paragraphs, to indicate the natural change from one subdivision of the general subject to another. These clefts serve as points of rest for the mind. Where no paragraph exists, the reader becomes tired and confused. Many short paragraphs, on the other hand, are an equal blemish in style, which thus becomes choppy and teasing. Indent the first line of every paragraph.

The Comma.

The comma, semicolon, colon, and period indicate progressive degrees of separation.

The chief purpose of the comma is to cut off from the rest of the sentence its particles and minor members.

Particles are indeclinable words, such as adverbs.

Use comma after

(1) Each of a series of words or phrases in the same construction.

Examples: "The peerage, the gentry, the bishops, the clergy, the universities, every lawyer, every trader, every farmer, stood aloof from him."

(2) Words or phrases in pairs.

Examples: "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote."

(3) Inverted expressions.

Examples: "Higher up on the walls, stuck there like swallows in their nests, sate other humble figures."

(4) Nouns in case absolute.

Examples: "His father dying, he succeeded to the estate."

(5) Coördinate clauses;

Examples: "Despair gave place to exultant hope, words of gratitude and congratulation were exchanged, and the prows were turned up-stream."

Use comma between

Contrasted words or phrases.

Examples: "We are going to-morrow, not today."

"It is all done from pure business motives, not from philanthropy."

Use comma to cut off

(1) Dependent and conditional clauses.

Examples: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

(2) Relative clauses presenting an additional thought.

Examples: "Du Maurier's house, which I saw lately, is now turned into some sort of a Home."

(3) Nouns in apposition.

Examples: "Joseph, the son of Jacob, went into Egypt."

(4) Introductory and parenthetical expressions.

Examples: "Now, in a selected passage from a selected author, we are entitled to assume that the best words and the most suitable constructions have been employed."

(5) Nouns independent by address.

Examples: "You speak, my friend, with a strange earnestness."

(6) Short quotations.

Examples: "The attack will be made on the center," said Lord Fitzroy Somerset. "I see it," was the cool reply of the duke.

(7) Participial phrases.

Examples: "Another feature which appealed strongly to us was the Hotel, conducted in the interest of the working men."

Note—The participial phrase is not cut off when the connection between it and the word it modifies is very close.

The Semicolon.

A compound sentence is one containing at least two clauses of equal value.

A complex sentence is one in which there are at least two clauses, one depending on the other.

Each part of a compound sentence may itself be complex.

Use a semicolon between

(1) Complex members of a compound sentence.

Examples: "What I delivered to you were sacred truths; but what you tell me is mere fable."

(2) Short sentences connected in meaning, but not grammatically.

Examples: "Her needlework was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on his band; it decked the baby's little cap."

(3) Clauses having a common dependence on another clause.

Examples: "They have forgotten that in

England not one shilling of paper money is received but of choice; that the whole has had its origin in cash actually deposited; and that it is convertible at pleasure into cash again."

Use a semicolon before

(1) An additional explanatory clause introduced by a conjunction.

Examples: "Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society; and I am left alone."

(2) Several particulars in apposition to a general term.

Examples: Winter has three months; December, January, and February.

THE COLON.

Use the colon between

Two members of a compound sentence when either member contains a semicolon.

Examples: "Maggie's cheeks began to flush with triumphant excitement: she thought Mr. Riley would have a respect for her now; it had been evident that he thought nothing of her before."

Use colon before

(1) An additional clause not introduced by a conjunction.

Examples: "This was the practice of the Grecian stage. But Terence made an innovation in the Roman: all his plays have double actions."

(2) Complex particulars in apposition to general terms.

Examples: "Indianapolis is the home of three writers of repute: Charles Major, whose Romance, 'When Knighthood Was in Flower,' has been widely read; Booth Tarkington, the author of 'Monsieur Beaucaire'; and James Whitcomb Riley, whose poems are very popular."

The Period.

Use periods after completed sentences which are not interrogative or exclamatory, and after abbreviations.

The Parenthesis.

Use the parenthesis to enclose words which

add something to the thought, but are not necessary to the sense of the statement.

Examples: "We have improved our equipment by the addition of a new wash machine (all brass), new wringer, apparatus for dipping register covers to make them waterproof."

The Dash.

(1) Use the dash to mark an abrupt change, either in construction or thought.

Examples: "Thus the plot thickens—but I weary you."

(2) Use the dash as a mark of exclusion less strong than the parenthesis.

Examples: "An increasing portion of the Manchester world—of that world, at any rate, which buys books—began, as the weeks rolled on, to take an interest in the pair."

I always dictate my punctuation to the stenographer. This serves two purposes: it assures me of being absolutely clear as to what and how I am dictating; and in the second place, it cares for my letter being properly

punctuated according to my own ideas. I recommend that every dictator learn as soon as possible to dictate his punctuation—it will help your letters and make them better and stronger in every way. And your stenographer, who may object at first, will soon thank you for taking this off her shoulders, and at the same time making it easier for her to read her notes.

✣ ✣ ✣

The best handling of the most letters in the shortest time is in no phase of business more important than in the selling. Here is where big and new ideas are ever needed. Here is where every sentence counts—where every word must be put in exactly the right way—where one word may destroy the attention, the interest, the order of the prospective customer.

Can you, Mr. Reader, dictate as good a letter one day as another, year in and year out? I cannot; and so I have prepared a system of paragraphs which give me at a moment's notice, any day and every day alike, the best

thoughts and expressions I have been able to collect in regard to points that repeatedly come up in my work.

By this method I can handle twice as much correspondence as formerly, better and in less time. The system may be of much benefit to many readers, and is as follows: Start today, and in the evening go over all the letters you have dictated. You will find that in the great majority of them there will be paragraphs that might just as well have been exactly the same throughout—the letters as a whole would be better if similar points in each had been covered by the best paragraph dictated during the day.

Make up a "best paragraph" on a certain, oft-repeated point—or compose several paragraphs—making your statements and using your arguments in as many different ways as possible. When you have satisfied yourself that you have exhausted your material on this point, have your stenographer write your paragraphs on a separate sheet of paper of uniform

size, and make a copy for herself. Number these paragraphs one, two, three, four, and so on. Be sure your stenographer numbers her copies the same as yours.

Now you have a number of good paragraphs covering one point; so take up another point, and another, and yet another, in turn, getting your paragraphs on all just as you have done on the first, until you have the best lot of paragraphs that you can compose on each point that will occur often in your letters. Number each new paragraph, starting from where you left off before.

But you want to know how to get ready reference, so that what you have done will be really serviceable. Index alphabetically each point that has been touched upon in the list of paragraphs. Then go through the paragraphs (which should be in numerical order) and record opposite each item in your index the number of each paragraph bearing upon this item. If a certain paragraph touches upon some

point other than the one with which it deals in particular, the number of this paragraph should be recorded opposite both headings. You now have an ever ready, simple, and complete index of each and every paragraph. Clamp paragraphs and index together, with the index as the first page, and your dictating encyclopedia is finished.

The use of these paragraphs will not only give you the best expressions you can command, but will save time in dictating; it will also aid your stenographer in getting your letters out on time, for she will soon know the paragraphs by heart, and so write them more readily than otherwise.

As your system becomes more perfect and complete—with a number of opening and closing paragraphs—dictating can be eliminated, except in the case of a few special letters. You will be able to go through your mail and indicate with pencil on each letter the paragraphs

you wish to constitute the reply, and then just turn the mail over to your stenographer to answer.

CHAPTER VII.

Collection Letters and Persistency.

Much has been written on the subject of Collection Letters. It is not within the scope of this book to take up this class of letters exhaustively. I have a little theory, however, born of considerable experience in collecting old accounts by mail, and believe it will be of value to readers to remember:—Don't ever let the debtor know you have given up hope; and, as long as possible, make him think you think he is as anxious to pay as you are to have him. It is surprising what results follow making a fellow think you believe he's honest, even after his every action would cause you to know otherwise. It is a psychological truth that even a dishonest fellow likes to " live up to his reputation " if he thinks he is regarded as honest.

So convincingly true have I found this in practice that I have cashed it into dollars and

cents many times in collections. If a fellow owes you and makes up his mind to beat you, I wouldn't give a nickel for your claim if you make him mad. But if you can just keep "jollying" him along, and blinding your eyes to his every attempt to make you write a discourteous letter, and thus give him an excuse for getting mad, you'll find in the end that some of your "dead beat claims" will be paid. I know this is the hardest thing in the world for a creditor to do; but if you have let yourself get bad accounts on your books, you might as well grin and bear it; and if you never let the debtor suspect your true feelings toward him, you will shame nine out of every ten into paying. The following specific example will illustrate my point.

A firm with which I am connected had a very doubtful looking, unpaid account of $50 down in Tennessee. The debtor wrote in that he could not pay, but would when he could—the usual "stall" to gain time and gradually

cease to give any encouragement whatever towards payment. The only thing for the firm to do was to make the best of a bad job; but, true to my beliefs, I wrote the following letter:

MR. J. P. JONES,
Somewhere, Tenn.

Dear Sir:

Of course it disappoints us to learn by your letter of April 28th that you cannot pay your account just at this time, for we have long ago paid for the material and the workmen to produce the goods, and we ought to have had your money long before this. But we believe you are just as anxious to liquidate the account as we are to have you; and so it is my pleasure to advise that we shall allow you a short time longer to arrange your payments.

Of course you understand that this is not customary, and it is only because we have implicit confidence in you that we allow you extra time to pay the account. Will you please send at least a partial remittance as soon as possible, and then the balance as you can?

I shall personally count upon you to do

this, and shall be looking forward with interest to your reply not later than the 28th.

Yours respectfully,

COWAN-SMITH-BROWN.

The return mail brought $20 towards the account, and the balance was eventually wiped out.

This is only one of hundreds of examples where I have secured settlement by such a letter, when drastic methods might have proved fatal. In collection letters it is usually a wise measure to set a specific date for payment to be made. *Of course, there are exceptions to all rules.*

⁂

I know of no greater reason why some firms fail to achieve results by mail than the fact that they give up too quickly. If a man says positively that he is not interested in your proposition, you will simply annoy him without making any headway if you just keep *pestering* him for an order; but if you keep hammering away

with bulldog determination, using every available resource, and arguing your proposition from every possible angle (always from the customer's standpoint, of course), you will find that many of the apparently hopeless prospects are not so bad after all.

The following series of dictated correspondence offers the best examples I know of on this point; and they are the letters verbatim as they were used to produce the final very gratifying result indicated:

12/31/10.

THE 5 & 10c STORE SYNDICATE,
Blankville, Pa.

Gentlemen:

Our Dayton Garters, which are selling through the canvassing agents of various supply houses for 25c per pair retail, can be furnished you at a figure that will allow you to retail them at only 10c per pair.

About a dozen Agent Supply Houses throughout the country—and the largest ones in the country at that—are handling these gar-

ters and selling them in large quantities at a retail price of 25c per pair. We do not believe that to allow you to put them in your stores will hinder the success of the various representatives of agency houses, who are selling by house to house canvass, and so we have no hesitancy about quoting you a rock bottom figure which will allow you to sell them direct to the consumer at only 10c per pair retail, thus giving the consumer the benefit of the canvasser's profit according to their present selling scheme, which will merely mean that at this low retail price the garters will move from your counters in great quantities.

You may have the garters at $10.80 per gross f. o. b. Dayton; or f. o. b. destination in lots of 5 gross or more to each point. Terms, 1% 10 days, 30 days net.

Kindly let us hear from you and we shall be glad to forward samples of the garters and also itemize completely the many selling points of merit. We shall look forward with much interest to the courtesy of an early reply, and

wishing you the compliments of the season, we are

Yours very truly,
THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. COMPANY.

✣ ✣

Jan. 6, 1911.

INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Referring to yours of the 31st ult. regarding Garters, would say that we do not think same would interest us, having a large line of various kinds listed, which have proven satisfactory with our trade.

Yours truly,
5 & 10c STORE SYNDICATE.

✣ ✣

1/20/11.

5 & 10c STORE SYNDICATE,
Blankville, Pa.

Gentlemen:

Your letter of Jan. 6th is before us, and indeed we have no doubt that the various lines of garters you have listed have proved satisfactory with your trade.

Our letter of Dec. 31st, however, did not explain what we will give you in addition to the Dayton Garters. The writer is connected with a strictly mail order enterprise that is meeting with much success, and we have outlined a plan whereby we will run our other advertisements in the daily papers of those towns where you have stores, and our customers on our other mail order proposition will use the Dayton Garters on your counters as a premium scheme. When we get a reply to our advertising on the other proposition, we shall write each prospective customer a personal letter and advise that if he will get so many of his friends to take up a certain number of the garters that are on sale on your counters a credit of a certain amount will be given to apply on our other proposition. We would make sure that the garters are actually bought from your store by making it necessary that at least a part of the box in which each pair of garters is packed shall be returned to us as evidence that so many garters have actually been bought and paid for at your store.

The above plan will more than advertise the

garters—it will sell them. A man will have to do more than simply know you have them on sale—he will have to go into your store and buy a pair, and get a certain number of his friends to do so, in order to fulfil the conditions of our agreement with him. This will also do more than sell the garters; it will put additional customers in your stores for other lines as well.

If I agree to run "ads" in the daily papers of each of the towns where you have branches, and follow them up as suggested in this letter, would you then reconsider your decision of Jan. 6th and at least give the Dayton Garters a trial? We ask no more than a trial for the Dayton Garters. Will you give them just one fair trial, if we back them as per this letter?

Yours very truly,

THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. COMPANY.

✣ ✣

Jan. 23, 1911.

INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

In answer to yours of the 20th, would say

that although this sounds like a good proposition, we would not be interested from the fact that we refrain from newspaper advertising.

Yours truly,
5 & 10c Store Syndicate.

✣ ✣

1/30/11.

5 & 10c Store Syndicate,
Blankville, Pa.

Gentlemen:

It is necessary to correct the impression we see you have, as indicated by your letter of Jan. 23d. In no way have we meant to suggest that you should use newspaper advertising. In our former letter, we simply told you that we were carrying on a mail-order proposition aside from this firm, and that if you would put in our Dayton Garters, we should be glad to make it a point to place some of our mail-order advertising in the towns where your branches are located, and to offer our other proposition free as a premium to persons who would interest their friends in going to your stores and buying Dayton Garters; and to prove that these had actually been purchased

from you, we should require that the garter box (or at least a portion of it) be returned to us as evidence of the sale over your counters, before we gave credit that so many garters had been purchased.

Of course, we could not get this started unless we should have a good sized order from you; but to prove that these garters will sell even without any stimulating, we are today sending you one dozen pairs, which we ask you to place on your counters at Blankville as a test.

If this one dozen pairs go fast enough at Blankville, without people even being given a chance to know about them except by casually passing through your store, it certainly stands to reason that they will go fast generally from all your branches if their sale is stimulated according to the plans we have in mind.

Yours respectfully,

THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. COMPANY.

Feb. 10, 1911.

INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.,

Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Just received your telegram inquiring what the results were from the test of Dayton Garters, of which you sent sample shipment of one dozen to determine what success the sale would be. We received the sample dozen in due time, and placed them on sale as suggested, deferring acknowledgement of your letter until we had satisfied ourselves regarding this matter. Although we have sold this small quantity without any special effort, we do not think this item would be of sufficient interest to us to place additional orders, and feel sure it would not be to our advantage in so doing. It would be necessary to order at least a gross for shipment, which quantity would be more than most of our stores would want to order, and especially in Men's Garters. As previously explained to you, we now have listed several very good numbers in Men's Garters, which we can order along with other items required,

and in that way we do not have to carry a large stock, which is an advantage to us, and also eliminates delivery charges.

Your scheme to promote a large sale for this item may be a good one, but we do not believe it would work out satisfactorily in the end. We regret very much that we cannot see our way clear to take up this item individually; and trust we have explained our position clearly, and if at any time in the future you have other good items to offer which might be of interest to us, assure you they will always receive our careful consideration.

Yours truly,
5 & 10c Store Syndicate.

⁘ ⁘

2/22/11.

5 & 10c Store Syndicate,
Blankville, Pa.

Gentlemen:

Your good letter of Feb. 10th is received and noted, and we certainly appreciate the pains you have taken to make your standpoint clear. We understand your position clearly.

But will you allow us to send one gross of

garters to each of your stores strictly on consignment? By this you have all to gain and positively nothing to lose. When the garters are all sold—then, and not until then—you may forward remittance as per our quotation of Dec. 31st. And if they do not sell, you will never owe us a cent. Do not give an official order—just simply advise if you will allow us to send a gross to each store on consignment, and if you will place them on display and give them an opportunity to be sold.

We know this proposition is a little unusual by its one-sidedness—we taking all the risk, etc.—but the reason is simply that we are just getting started and know that we shall have to fight for a chance to get recognition for our garters—and we have confidence enough in the garters themselves to back them up as suggested.

Yours very truly,

THE INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.

P. S.—If you let us send a gross to each store, and they are disposed of, we shall duplicate the procedure if desired.

Mar. 8, 1911.

INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Yours of the 22nd ult. came duly to hand, but was somewhat delayed in receiving attention owing to the writer's absence. In regard to your proposition, would say, same is entirely fair, and we are willing to allow you to ship to Blankville Store 1 gross of same, as you suggest. Should we find this number to sell so much better than our other numbers, shall be pleased to take the matter up further.

Yours truly,
5 & 10C STORE SYNDICATE.

CHAPTER VIII.

Miscellaneous Sample Letters.

I have already reproduced a number of letters that have been successful in selling lumber by mail. I am pleased to reproduce the following series of three more, for these three letters have been exceptionally successful, and you cannot help but observe some very good points by going over them carefully.

✣ ✣

First Letter.

Mr. N. Y. Dealer,
Somewhere, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

From the day you open this letter in your office, and continuing through our subsequent business dealings, please remember that there are two grounds on which we solicit your orders (and why we get them), these reasons always standing out paramount to all others—

1st—Lower prices

2nd—Better quality

Here follows the why and the wherefore.

The carfare, hotel bills, salary, etc., that most firms put into maintaining travelling salesmen, we give to you. A successful experience has taught us that we can negotiate with our customers possibly even better direct from headquarters by mail, than through the medium of a salesman. Postage, stationery, stenographic help, etc., cost much less than to maintain a crew of salesmen, and the saving thus effected has enabled us to reduce the cost of our lumber to the lowest possible figure.

And another thing, we keep our stocks moved out closely, and in so doing save a great deal in the way of fire insurance; storage charges; extra handling; interest, etc. All this you are given the benefit of in our reduced prices. Incidentally, of course it reverts back to our interests again by bringing us an increased volume of business.

With reference to the quality of the lumber, we wish to remind you that we are not in business for a day, and we well know that your

continued business (which is what we're after) will only come our way as a result of always giving you the best possible quality. Isn't the fact that we want your business, and are well aware of the only conditions under which we can hope for it (price and quality), the best assurance you can possibly have on this score?

We take the product direct from the stump to the dealers. We guarantee the quality of our lumber, and stand behind this guarantee. Our motto is, the highest grade standard stock.

Enclosed you will find a list of stock and prices (which prices, bear in mind, are f. o. b. your city). Please make up an order for your requirements and let us prove what we can do for you.

Assuring you in closing that your orders and commands will always have our prompt and best attention, and that your reply with order is being looked forward to with much interest, we are

Yours very truly,
THE ELM LUMBER COMPANY.

SECOND LETTER.

MR. N. Y. DEALER,
Somewhere, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Didn't you get our letter?

Or didn't we make it sufficiently clear that our prices are f. o. b. your city via cheapest route?

Bearing in mind that these are delivered prices, and also that the quality of our lumber is unexcelled, may we not have your order and instructions covering some of our product as per the enclosed list?

Mr. B. F. Vinson of Washington, N. Y., has written us as follows:

"Please ship me one car 1 x 10 Roofers S2S&S/L. I refused to give this order to two different agents this morning, because they are a little above your prices, and especially because I doubt their claims that they will ship better stock."

That's just the way you also will be feeling

after you've received your first order. May we not hear from you at an early date?

Yours very truly,
THE ELM LUMBER COMPANY.

✣ ✣

THIRD LETTER.

MR. N. Y. DEALER,
Somewhere, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Here is another list of stock and prices (the third we've sent), and also a stamped and addressed envelope, which we ask you to please use in advising us if our two former communications failed to reach you. There is just a chance that these letters through a stenographic error were misaddressed; and if such is the case, we would like to know it and trace it up. We can duplicate either, or both, our former letters.

We await the courtesy of an early reply with interest.

Yours respectfully,
THE ELM LUMBER COMPANY.

✣ ✣ ✣

A great many persons have mistaken ideas about what is essential in order to be successful

with the mail order business. There are certain fundamental business rules that must be followed for success in the mail order business, just the same as in any other business under the sun. Business judgment—and the necessity of working along strictly legitimate business lines—is just as necessary, possibly more so, in the mail order business than in any other. The following actual example of how a party with a mistaken idea was put on the right track, will make my point clearer than I could possibly make it by merely commenting abstractly:

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Enclosed find $10.00. Please send me the latter part of the week, the letter on "Baking Powder." I am going to Lima, Ohio, Sunday, May 7th, and would like to have it ready for use the first of that week. I think it advisable to impress upon them the fact that it is a legiti-

mate proposition and a pure cream of tartar baking powder as pure as Royal, Dr. Price's, or any baking powder made. Also that it can be made with a saving of ⅓ the cost of Royal or any other powder.

Would also like to make it clear to them how easily it is made, can be made by any member of the family, only taking a few minutes to make any desired quantity. The ingredients used are all in powder form and is made by "mixing" with a sifter (any fine sieve).

Also call their attention to a trial of the sample powder sent.

Write this up as you wish, using any new idea that may have come to you or giving any advice that you may give.

Trusting I may receive same by Monday, May 8th, at Lima, Ohio, care General Delivery, I am,

Yours truly,

J. R. JONES.

P. S.—This baking powder has no name. It is simply guaranteed to be absolutely pure and is made at home. Money refunded if

not found satisfactory. (You will please use the price, $1.00 for recipe.)

✣ ✣ ✣

J. R. JONES,
General Delivery,
Lima, O.

Dear Sir:

We have been thinking a good deal about your proposition since receiving your letter of May 1st, and we have come to the conclusion that you will be unwise to attempt to market your baking powder by simply selling the recipe, and we have arrived at this definite conclusion for the following reasons:

In the first place, you couldn't have a much better article than a good baking powder for sale of the article itself. The success with which Royal Baking Powder has met is proof in itself of the truth of this statement.

And in the second place, having an article that is a winner, we do not believe you should dwarf your possibilities by letting any one else know the recipe by which you make said article. Any business in this country that has reached big proportions has done so as a result of having

something that will mean duplicate orders and satisfied customers. Now, if you sell the recipe for making this baking powder to a customer, this would constitute your first, final, and only profit from this same customer, so far as the baking powder is concerned. We suggest that you keep the recipe known only to yourself, and sell the baking powder—then, when you once get a customer, you can with a fair degree of safety count upon his continued orders, meaning a continuous profit through the years to come.

And another reason for not giving out the recipe is, that then you give some one to whom you sell said recipe the same opportunity for making money out of it that you have yourself. And if you should happen to sell the recipe to someone with a little more capital or ability than you and ourselves have between us, you would cramp your own opportunities by just as many such competitors as might thus arise.

And, again, suppose you sell the recipe to a Mrs. Jones, for instance, and then later you quote Mrs. Smith, her next door neighbor, a dollar for the same recipe. If Mrs. Smith hap-

pens to mention the matter to Mrs. Jones, what is to prevent Mrs. Jones from "beating you to it" and selling the recipe under your price—or even giving it away?

We believe that you have a great opportunity with this article, which you say is truly meritorious, and we want to see you go about marketing it in the right way from the very start. Of course, if you really want us to write you a letter just to sell the recipe, we will promptly go ahead and do so just as soon as we hear from you. But we do trust you will reconsider your decision and decide to make up the baking powder yourself, and then have us give you a letter guaranteed to do all that could be expected along these lines towards making customers of prospects.

We trust you will thoroughly digest the contents of this letter, and then let us hear from you, and we shall await with interest your reply.

Yours very truly,
THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

I received your letter addressed to me at Lima, in due season, and have delayed writing in order to get prices and figures on the production of the article, that I might lay it plainly before you for further advice. I am willing to take your advice and send samples to prospective customers, with a view to the sale of baking powder, instead of selling the recipe, if you think the prices I will have to get, to make it profitable, are not too high to be an inducement for customers to buy. If the sales should not be greater than 10%, the business would not be a profitable one, though, should it prove to be a better proposition and bring 20% of the orders solicited, it would then be a good proposition. 10% would only bring back the investment. 20% would give a nice profit.

Upon separate sheet I give cost and figures of shipment of order.

I received from the addressing company their list, which seems to be O. K.

If you still feel confident of the success of

the enterprise after having the figures upon the cost of the article, then give me the letter, for use in addressing prospective customers; and any advice you may think of will also be appreciated. Please advise if I should mail as first or second class, having learned at local postoffice that I may send the sample that I wish including typewritten letter unsealed for 1c for 2 ounces. I find that my sample and the letter will come under that weight nicely. Also please advise if you would use postoffice lock box or not, and please to suggest anything needful.

I trust I shall hear from you soon, if you think the business O.K. and prices right, and a chance for a profitable percentage of orders. I shall go ahead with your letter that you send and any advice that you give.

Yours truly,

J. R. JONES.

MR. J. R. JONES,
Lima, O.

Dear Sir:

At last here is a letter we believe you can profitably use.

Send it out first to a list of Ohio names, and then gradually broaden your field of operations. We suggest that you send it in towns, and not in the country as you once suggested.

Notice that you will be getting a good list of Grocers, whom you can go after later and almost compel them to buy—surely you can do so if those using your samples are really pleased. Here is the card we suggest enclosing:

U. S. BAKING POWDER CO.,
Lima, Ohio.

I have received your letter and the sample of your powder. I should be glad to know if I could get U. S. Baking Powder whenever I want it at my grocer's, whose name and address is

. . . . . .

Signed . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

We also suggest an order blank that can be used in ordering direct; this is somehow always conducive to an order—probably because it makes ordering easy. You should also, we think, enclose an addressed return envelope. Thus a customer need have nothing but a pencil and the money. This will make three enclosures to go with the letter.

You need not stick to the name we have used. "American," for instance, would be a good name, and might please you better than "U. S." Or you may have a much better name than either.

You should put up your sample in a neat and attractive package; and in fact your whole letter will largely depend on not being "cheap" in any particular. Have good stationery, and be sure to have your letter multigraphed and filled-in to a perfect match.

Wishing you the very best of luck, we are

Yours very truly,

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

THE LETTER.

MRS. HIRAM SMITH,
Akron, O.

Dear Madam:

Although you will save considerable in actual dollars and cents by using U. S. Baking Powder, still our plea to prospective customers is always on the ground of Quality.

You will find by using the enclosed sample (two teaspoonfuls) that U. S. Baking Powder is—as it is absolutely guaranteed to be—a pure cream of tartar baking powder. There is not the slightest adulteration; and it is made by the most hygienic process.

"Talk's cheap"—we know that, and it is the reason we send you some of the powder itself for trial, instead of merely telling you about it. We are sending two teaspoonfuls, as we believe this amount will be plenty for a test. You should use about a quart of flour with this much baking powder.

After you've eaten something good baked with this sample, and want more, you may get it direct from us at only 35 cents per pound, in

not less than 5-lb. lots. The powder comes to you prepaid.

We will make you a special offer of only $3 for ten pounds.

For your convenience, it is our intention to ask your grocer to handle our baking powder. So will you please fill out and return the enclosed card? Please do this at once before you forget it.

Trusting you may enjoy whatever you bake with this sample, and thanking you for giving the powder a trial, we are

Yours very truly,
THE U. S. BAKING POWDER CO.
....., Manager.

P. S.—And when opportunity affords, will you tell your friends about U. S. Baking Powder? THANKS.

✣ ✣ ✣

It has already been stated that there are four separate and distinct steps necessary to accomplish a sale; but it cannot in all cases be the proper function of the letter to accomplish all four of these steps. In the following examples,

the letters were used by a Retail Shoe House, and the object of the letters was accomplished when the prospective customers were brought to the store. Thus the function of the letters was to attract attention and arouse interest; and then it was up to the clerks in the store to accomplish the sale. Note that in the first letter a 25c credit inducement is made; and in the next letter the vanity of the prospect is appealed to and he is flattered by getting what he believes to be a special invitation.

I reproduce below the entire file of correspondence with this firm; showing first the first form suggested for their use, together with the credit check which accompanied same:

MR. SHOE BUYER,
Blankville, Quebec.

Dear Sir:

Yourself, your family, and your friends are most cordially invited to visit us at our store. Of course, we will be glad to see you any time, but are extending the invitation especially at this

time, for we feel sure you will be considering a visit to some store for Spring and Summer shoes.

Now, don't misconstrue this invitation—it is not an appeal for you to BUY HERE—it is simply an invitation to come and see what WE HAVE HERE. You will be just as welcome, and will be shown the same attention, whether you buy or not. Do we mean this? Indeed we do—COME AND SEE. The fact that we have recently made an addition to our store in the form of a Ladies' Parlor will bear us out, and surely shows that we have at heart the comfort of our friends and patrons—doesn't it?

Here's something entirely new—we also let you know the secret of the how and the wherefore of the offer. Firm believers in advertising, we have set aside a certain sum for this end. How to most judiciously spend it is our problem. We know that "the best advertisement in the world is a satisfied customer." Now, since we satisfy every customer, the best way to spend this advertising appropriation for results will be in some way to make it attractive

for new customers to come to us—meaning so many walking and talking advertisements.

Hence the whole appropriation—minus the cost for sending out 3,000 letters telling of our plan—has been placed on our books to the credit of our patrons. YOUR SHARE OF THIS AMOUNT is forwarded today in the form of the enclosed Customer's Check for 25c. As part payment on any pair of shoes bought of us, NOW OR AT ANY TIME, this check will be honored at this store just the same as would a check on a bank.

You will, without doubt, be ready for a new pair of Oxfords very shortly, and will want to accept our invitation to call upon us and see our line. Our fine Spring shoes, in both black and tan, are admired by all who see them; and as we carry all widths from AA to E, we can certainly fit you perfectly. Notice the enclosed booklet showing various styles of the famous McPherson Shoes—but SEEING THESE is the only way to appreciate them.

But whether you see immediate use for the Customer's Check or not, DON'T MISLAY IT. It will be as good ten years from now as today.

You wouldn't simply throw away 25c for no reason, would you? Surely not—and the same logic should cause you to guard carefully this check; or, better still, to use it AT ONCE. Will you? Will you at least accept our invitation to call? Very respectfully,

THE ROBERTS SHOE COMPANY.

CUSTOMERS' CREDIT CHECK № 259

Brantford, Ont May, 1910.

There is a balance on our books due Bearer to the amount of $ 25

No. Dollars and 25 Cents

Account of good will, charged to Advertising

To the Cashier. THE ROBERTS & VAN-LANE SHOE CO.

Per W. PINLATSON
Manager

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Here's another order.

Now, on Wednesday, June 28th, we want to start here what must be the biggest shoe sale ever seen in this city. We are opening another store, and need some money.

You can mention, we have purchased the

bankrupt stock of a Blankville merchant named L. A. Smith. He had a lovely stock, but bought too heavily, and his creditors closed down on him; we got this at 66⅔ cents on the dollar. Independent of this, we are including in the sale our entire stock of summer wear.

LADIES: Women's Dongola Kid Oxfords, patent toe cap made of all solid leather, 88c per pair; regular Ladies' Tan Oxfords, Ties, Pumps, Patent Oxfords and Pumps, Chocolate Oxfords, Pumps, etc.—regular $2.50, $3, and even some $3.50 lines—all one price, $1.78.

MEN: Solid Leather Blucher cut shoes, soles extra strong, regular $1.75 and $2.00 lines, 98c. All Tan, Patent, Gun Metal, Vici Kid Oxfords that were $4.50, $5, and $6 will be $3.28, including such famous makes as the Packard Shoe, the Monarch Shoe made by the Brandon Shoe Co., The McPherson Shoe, the Frank Slater Shoe, etc.

Now, don't make the letter too long, but DRIVE IT HOME. Any suggestion you can offer to sell goods, profit or no profit, I am game for. I want cash and lots of it. I want to have to

order a squad of police to keep the crowd in order for the opening day.

Now, I want to send out 7,000 letters, so get busy.

Yours truly,
ROBERTS SHOE COMPANY.
Per J. F. VAN LANE.

⁘ ⁘

THE ROBERTS SHOE CO.,
Blankville, Quebec.

Gentlemen:

Thanks for your order of June 6th.

We have immediately put ourselves to work, and the result is the enclosed letter, which we feel positive will pay you well. It is snappy and will be read. Your object is to get customers to come to your store on the day of the sale, and we have built this letter with this object in view.

We think it will be well, and give a personal touch, if you send along with the letter (as the only enclosure) a card, a little smaller than envelope size, with some such wording as the following:

Brantford, June 23rd. 1911

To Our Clerks:--

This will present

Mr. Taylor

who comes at my special request to look over our entire line, especially in consideration of our Sale offer. Please show him every attention possible.

Signed,

J. G. Van-Lane.

Trusting this will pull so well, you will be only too glad to send us your check for $10, which we shall be expecting about the first week in July, we are

Yours very truly,

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

P. S.—We suggest "filling in" the above card in pen or typewriter. This will attract special attention and add personal touch. A cheap clerk can easily be secured who can do this O. K. for you.

MR. PROSPECTIVE SHOE BUYER,
Quebec, Quebec.

Dear Sir:

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28TH, 1911.

Now remember that date, for it marks the opening of the biggest shoe sale ever seen in Quebec.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." Of course, it was too bad that Mr. L. A. Smith of Blankville bought too heavily, causing his creditors to close down on him. (And he had such a fine stock.)

But the fact that we got this stock at 66⅔ cents on the dollar means your gain, for we are going to give you the benefit of the bargain.

LOOK HERE—

Women's Dongola Kid Oxfords will be only 88c per pair.

Ladies' Tan Oxfords, Ties, Pumps, Patent Oxfords and Pumps, Chocolate Oxfords, Pumps, etc., will go for only $1.78 per pair. (Regular prices, from $2.50 to $3.50.)

Men's Solid Leather Blucher Cut

Shoes, extra strong soles, will go for only 98c.

All Tan, Patent, Gun Metal, Vici Kid Oxfords will be only $3.28. (Regular prices for these range from $4.50 to $6.)

These offers include such well known makes as the Packard Shoe; the Monarch Shoe, made by the Brandon Shoe Co.; the McPherson Shoe; the Frank Slater Shoe, and others.

I am personally calling your attention to the date of this sale, for I know you will not want to miss it. Here is a special card you may present to any clerk in the store.

I shall personally be expecting you.

Remember the date, Wednesday, June 28th.

Yours very truly,

J. F. VAN LANE.

P. S.—And will you tell your friends to come?

* * *

The following letter was so successful in interesting firms in good letters that I believe

it is not amiss to reproduce it here. The letter is in conversational style, which always appeals, and, while it is very catchy, it is absolutely to the point, and never for a minute loses track of the fact that its mission is to give conviction of a truth:

THE AUTO SUPPLY CO.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

"Mr. Brown in?"

"Yes, but can't see you till ten o'clock."

So the Head Salesman from Morehouse & Co. sat from 8:30 till 10. No one else in town to see—Brown's firm must be about ready to order—simply was nothing else to do.

"Sorry," said Brown at 10:05, "but this morning's mail contained low quotation from Jones & Co., in such attractive and convincing letter—and we are in such hurry for the goods—I wired rush order not ten minutes ago."

Thus a letter found entree and, at an expense of 2c postage, sold $700 worth of goods while the Big Salesman was waiting outside.

Do you fully appreciate the power of a really good letter in these busy days?

Surely you do—then just sign order blank attached to enclosed circular and forward today with only $10 and either carbon copy or original of the letter you wish criticized.

Yours for more mail orders in 1912,

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

⁂

I do not believe there is any one point more vitally necessary for the success of a letter than the fact *that the letter must ring true.* A letter that impresses the reader as being honest and straightforward in every respect will accomplish more than even a better constructed letter that the reader cannot but feel is not sincere. There is an old saying that it actually "pays to be honest"—and I want to direct your attention to the following letter to the Smith Novelty Co. There is really no particular sales argument brought out in this letter other than its absolute straightforwardness; but note that this very thing brought a ten dollar fee almost by return mail.

I am reproducing the entire file with the Smith Novelty Co., as I believe there is something for the reader to learn from the file as a whole—that would not be gotten simply by showing you the letter that was written on their order. I want you to notice in particular the letter itself that was written for the ten dollar fee. Notice the prominence of "you," not only at the beginning of the letter, but all the way through it. This letter is an example where it was necessary in one letter to attract attention, arouse interest, create desire, and induce the resolve to order. The single letter that must accomplish all four steps is the most difficult to prepare—but, as I have before stated, it is absolutely necessary to have such a letter when the profit possible to be derived from the article you are selling would not admit of the expense of a long follow-up. Without further comment, I reproduce the file with the Smith Novelty Co., and it is my belief that a careful study of these real specimens cannot fail to be of marked benefit to the reader.

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing you a shirt buttoner which I would like to sell through the mail. I am also enclosing a card, upon which 24 buttoners could be placed. My idea is to sell the cards through the mail. The buttoners sell for 10c. This gives the retailer $2.40 per card, and by selling direct to them I can cut out a salesman's profits and give them the card for about one dollar ($1.00). I am sending you instructions of how to use the buttoner.

What would be your price for writing a letter, also a " follow-up letter "? I realize that a good letter is necessary to bring in the business, so I am writing you for information.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I am

Yours truly,
C. F. Smith, Pres.
THE SMITH NOVELTY COMPANY.

May 20/11.

MR. C. F. SMITH, Pres.
SMITH NOVELTY CO.,
Smithville, Tenn.

Dear Sir:

After reading your letter of May 12th, and very carefully considering your proposition, it is our very great pleasure to advise that we think we see great merit in your idea, and it seems there should be no reason whatever why you should not be able to make your proposition a great success.

We are always very candidly honest with anyone writing us in this manner, and often discourage prospects whose propositions seem to us not to admit of much hope for success. Of course it would seem that this might tend to turn away possible business from our office, and yet we firmly believe it pays in the end to do so. We are not solicitous of orders to write letters for propositions that we believe cannot under any circumstances be made to pay.

We simply explain ourselves in this manner to show that we can write copy for you with our heart and soul in our work—and this will

certainly count very materially toward successful results attained. Our terms are: 1 letter, $10; series of two letters, $18; series of three letters, $25.

Awaiting your early commands, Mr. Smith, we are

Yours very truly,
THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

⁘ ⁘

May 24, 1911.

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Yours of 20th inst. at hand. I am sending you $10.00 for one letter. I will give you a few facts, from which you can build the letter.

I guess I mailed you a buttoner, etc. I have them put up on cards. The card is 7 by 9 inches and has 24 buttoners on it.

The retail man sells them for 10c each, receiving $2.40 for each card. I want to tell him that on account of selling by mail we can give him the buttoners at $1.00 per card, thus allowing him a great deal over 100% profit.

Another good point is that it is new, and there is nothing like it, and nothing can be substituted for it; that every store in town doesn't have them on sale. I thought of making but one sale in a town, of less than 1,000 inhabitants, inorder to insure sales. You can use your judgment about that, or it might be put in as a P. S. when the occasion suited. Of course, the $1.00 is to accompany order.

What I want is a good letter that will get the business. Make it as good a puller as you can. If you need further information, write me.

I would like to get started as soon as possible, so will be greatly obliged to you if you will complete it at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

C. F. SMITH.

P. S.—I would like to get a better name than "The Smith Novelty Co." Guess that will not come in the letter, though. Do you think it would be best to enclose a sample with each letter?

MR. C. F. SMITH, Pres.
SMITH NOVELTY CO.,
Smithville, Tenn.

Dear Sir:

In compliance with your order of the 24th, we have taken pleasure in preparing the enclosed copy for a form letter. We trust it may meet with your approval; and it is needless to say, we trust it may "pull" splendidly for you.

We suggest that you have a good cut and description of the buttoner gotten up. We do not recommend that you send sample buttoner; though we do most decidedly believe you should send a good illustration and description. We could attend to having this gotten up for you in Dayton, if you cannot have it done satisfactorily in Smithville.

You should put out a fine looking letter in every respect. Multigraph the body of the letters and then make the "fill-in" a perfect match.

Thanking you for the order, and awaiting your further commands, we are

Yours very truly,
THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

The following copy prepared for this firm is for a letter to go to dealers:

Dear Sir:

You will attract both new and old customers to your store; and—

You will make for yourself $1.40 out of every $2.40 you take in—

If you place our SHIRT BUTTONERS on your counters.

There is a real need for a good Shirt Buttoner (every man or woman will admit that); and ours fills that need. It is in a class by itself—nothing like it on the market, and not likely to be.

Sell something that brings and binds trade—that's the secret of success. And but few articles that will accomplish this for you also offer such a wonderful profit—OVER 100%.

Giving you this profit is possible on our part by the elimination of the expense connected with salesmen. We do business entirely by mail, and find postage, stationery, etc., much cheaper than railway fare, hotel bills, and high salaries. The saving thus effected we give you the benefit of in the price of the Buttoners.

The Buttoners come on 7 x 9 inch cards, 24 on a card. They retail at only 10c each, giving each card a retail value of $2.40. Note the enclosed printed illustration and description of the Buttoner; and by the way, remember that, costing only 10c each, they will sell like hot cakes.

The price to you is only $1 per card. How many shall we send you?

Yours very truly,
SMITH NOVELTY COMPANY.

The following are some real specimens of letter criticism that I believe it will be of value to the reader to read—to note the actual letters that were used, and then to try to gain as much as possible by studying the letters of criticism that were given.

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Enclosed find $5, for which please give me your personal criticism of the enclosed letter—

tell how it could be strengthened—give any suggestions for improvement that may present themselves.

Yours truly,

O. C. BROWN.

Dear Sir:

"HOW TO JUDGE A PATENT" should prove of great value and interest to you, and for this reason I enclose my booklet illustrating what may be termed "PATENT SENSE AND PATENT NONSENSE."

If, after glancing over the table of "contents" on page 2, and comparing the Geo. B. Selden Automobile Patent claim on page 12, the Morse Telegraph Patent claim on page 14, and the Bell Telephone Patent claim on page 15, with the absolutely worthless claim of a recently issued patent on page 19, together with the claims of such patents as you may be interested in, you do not feel like carefully preserving this booklet for future reference, you can of course consign it to the waste-basket.

Trusting that you will find the booklet of

real value, and that you will thank me for having sent it to you, I am

Yours truly,

✣ ✣

MR. O. C. BROWN,
Cleveland, O.

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your order, Mr. Brown.

Your form letter is an exceptionally good one. You talk actual facts, and that is what you must do to convince a prospective client. However, Mr. Brown, we must criticize you for even suggesting that your booklet may be consigned to the wastebasket. You must not put such thoughts into the heads of your prospective clients. And in this same connection we criticize your first paragraph, where you say, "should prove of value." You had better say, "will prove of value." Don't have any doubt in your own mind as to the outcome—make your prospective customer feel that you are positive of what his answer is going to be. If you have any doubt, and show it as you do in your letter, you certainly cannot blame him for doubting.

With the exception of the criticism just given, we think your letter would pass muster most satisfactorily; but at the same time we would further suggest that you open your letter with some startling expression to awaken your prospect's interest, before going further. You base your strong reliance on your booklet—and this is good. Then why not start your letter with something like this: "You'll find it on page 12 of the enclosed booklet!" We would make such a sentence stand out by itself as the first paragraph; then you can go ahead and give a few remarks about what will be found on page 12. Such an expression at the very beginning will induce your prospects to satisfy their curiosity as to what they will actually find on page 12.

Thanking you again for your interest, we are

Yours very truly,

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

⁂

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

Please accept my thanks for your letter of

the 5th inst., criticizing my form letter recently submitted to you.

I shall certainly adopt your suggestions and as a favor to my clients and friends will refer them to you, whenever they have anything in your line, as your letter of criticism convinces me that you stand at the head of your profession. Again thanking you, and wishing you the success you so well deserve, I remain

Yours truly,

O. C. BROWN.

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

We enclose $5.00, for which kindly send us "The Successful Sales Letter" as per enclosed offer, and in accordance with your offer we enclose a letter upon which we would like to receive your criticism.

This letter is the second of a series of letters, which we send out to companies who are reported to be building new plants or additions to their present plants. In order that you may

better understand this letter, we also enclose a copy of first letter of this series.

Awaiting your reply, we remain

Yours truly,

THE HUDSON CLUTCH CO.

LETTER No. 1.

Gentlemen:

Your new building project has been called to our notice, and we desire to know if you contemplate using any transmission equipment.

We manufacture a full line of Power Transmission Machinery, including Hudson Collar-Oiling Bearings, Hudson Friction Clutch Pulleys, Turned Shafting Rope Drive apparatus, Pulleys, Gears, and all other accessories that go to make a complete line.

Your checked notations on the enclosed return postal card will receive immediate attention.

If your plans are still indefinite, won't you kindly note the future date upon which we should again call your attention to our apparatus?

Yours very truly,

THE HUDSON CLUTCH CO.

LETTER No. 2.

Gentlemen:

As you have not replied to our letter of ....., probably because it was received at an inopportune time, or did not reach the interested party, we are again addressing you.

We manufacture a very complete line of Power Transmission Machinery, including Hudson Friction Clutches and Hudson Collar-Oiling Bearings.

Will you require any transmission machinery in connection with the new work contemplated? We again solicit an opportunity of presenting you a proposal upon our apparatus, or sending you our descriptive literature if your plans are yet indefinite.

Thanking you for a reply indicating your wishes, we are

Yours very truly,
THE HUDSON CLUTCH CO.

THE HUDSON CLUTCH CO.,
Hudson, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Your letter of May 15th is received, and

we are pleased to enclose a copy of "The Successful Sales Letter" in compliance with your order.

In regard to the two letters you have sent us for criticism, we must report that we think we see very great room for improvement. We fail to see where, in either letter, you have offered any reason for prospective customers being interested in your goods because of anything you have told them in the letter. It seems to us, you merely offer your services, without telling why it is going to be of any value to the reader to accept your offer. In these days of keen competition, you have got to do more than simply tell them you have something to sell—you've got to point out to them very carefully, clearly, and even psychologically, why they will be interested in buying what you have to sell.

I believe that, before preparing your letters, you should line up all the available selling arguments you have. Then from all your arguments decide on which ones it will be best to use. Then, when you have decided on what arguments to use, decide on the order of presen-

tation. And then present these arguments in succession, confining one argument to a letter. Sometimes you can incorporate two or three arguments in the same letter, but not often can this be done to advantage. If you put out such letters as this, those who do "contemplate using any transmission equipment" will be very positively interested in writing to you. But simply your "desire to know" whether your readers contemplate using such equipment is not going to be of the least interest to them.

Your follow-up letter is simply a repetition of the first—simply a "reminder" that the first letter has not been answered—and we really cannot understand how this could give you satisfactory results under any circumstances. If your prospects were interested in the first letter, they would have answered—and they will not thank you for simply sending this reminder. We have formed a very firm belief that follow-up letters should each contain an entirely new reason why a prospect should answer—why it is to his interest to do so.

Trusting our suggestions may be of both in-

terest and value, and that letters reconstructed along the lines we have suggested will give you an added increase of business, we are

Yours very truly,
THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

✣ ✣ ✣ ✣ ✣

Another client, who is in the insurance business, submitted for criticism the following form letter. Letter and criticism follow:

Gentlemen:

Do you feel that you are safe from an accident with your car, which may injure someone and make you liable for perhaps thousands of dollars? Have you ever thought such a condition possible?

You undoubtedly are aware that as a rule the owner of the car gets it in the neck, whether to blame or not. You know the value of Life and Fire Insurance. What's the matter with a Liability policy to protect you?

I can save you money in the purchasing of same, and give you as good as the best.

Respectfully,
H. C. GREENE.

MR. H. C. GREENE,
Greensburg, Ind.

Dear Sir:

We have your letter of May 8th and the letter you have sent us for criticism. We like the way you start the letter by asking questions. We recommend that you make each question a separate paragraph in itself.

The only trouble with your letter, as we see it, is that you do not lead up to some clinching argument. You start out all right, but then you leave the prospect in mid-air—and without winding up your letter in such a way as to drive him to definite action one way or the other. It is one thing to make a person realize that they ought to do something; but all this is useless without going further and making them take the step in the direction you wish.

You shouldn't ask the prospect "What's the matter with a Liability policy?"—Tell him the accruing benefits; that's up to you. The chances are, he is not familiar and don't know how to answer your question anyhow—and he may not know "what's the matter" with such a policy, or what's the good of one.

Trusting the suggestions we have made will be of very material benefit to you, we are

Yours very truly,

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU,
Dayton, O.

Gentlemen:

I am about to put on the market a Pennant Holder for automobiles. I send you a draft of my sales letter for criticism and improvement. I also show a cut of the trade mark on letterhead. It will be advertised under the name as in the circular and made by the Gem Mfg. Co., Jamestown, N. Y.

Please look over the proposition from different angles and write me fully for my five dollars, which I enclose.

I might state that the article is a real JIM DANDY, to use a rather vulgar description, and appeals at sight and the receiver will be delighted with it.

My folder contains an order blank and illustration of a touring party with the attachment on the car.

Now, see what you can do with it, and let me hear at the earliest possible date, as everything is ready for the printer.

Very truly yours,

S. A. BURTON.

✣ ✣

Dear Sir:

Whatever makes motoring more enjoyable is like spice to the pudding. The charm lies in the flavor.

The flying of your home or club pennant from your automobile, when en tour, is now part of the creed. It is an honor to your town and inspires good fellowship everywhere you go.

And here's where we come in.

Equipped with a "GEM PENNANT HOLDER" gives a touch of nattiness and distinction to your car, adds interest to your trip, and you feel the double satisfaction of having the right thing in the right place.

The "GEM PENNANT HOLDER" is instantly slipped on the windshield and adapted to various positions on the car. Does away with all ragtag and claptrap devices, and is in

perfect harmony with all high grade accessories. It combines elegance and utility.

For holidays, meets, and on all festive occasions, the "GEM PENNANT HOLDER" is indispensible to the trim motor car. To see it is to want it. Simply irresistible.

BUT LISTEN—More wonderful still is the PRICE.

Handsomely tooled and modeled of heavy brass, highly polished, turned edges, including a 17-inch brass standard fitted with crown and rings, shipped prepaid and insured to any address from coast to coast, upon receipt of—ONE DOLLAR.

Separate attachment for wood or metal dash, 25c extra.

See the FOLDER.

✣ ✣

MR. S. A. BURTON,
Jamestown, N. Y.
Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 9th is received. Thanks for the order.

Your form letter is an exceptionally good

one; you start in the right way and cover the ground very well indeed.

But, if you are as familiar with the mail order business as we are, you will be aware that you must have a great big profit to succeed in this venture. If you land 10% of those addressed into orders, you will be doing well; and at the same time you must not sacrifice anything in the way of the quality of the letter and literature you send. You know what your expenses in this respect will be as well as we do—possibly better. If your profit is such that you will make money if you land orders from 10% of those addressed, then you will be safe in going ahead—and if you are fortunate enough to get better returns, you are so much ahead. But we don't believe we would risk the venture unless you will be making money at 10% returns. We know you would prefer us to be perfectly frank in what we tell you. You see, you have no "come back," and must win or lose according to the results of the one letter; for, unless there is something about your proposition that is not

known to me, the one dollar is all you are after.

We have said your letter is good, and it is—but there is one suggestion we would like to make: You do not CLINCH THE ORDER as we think you ought. You lead up to the price in good shape, but there you leave the reader to order at once or to procrastinate—just as he sees fit. And the chances are, he will "wait till to-morrow" unless you hammer home the advisability of ordering now, "today." When you have made an offer by mail it is not sufficient to then leave it up to the prospect to do the rest—you've got to almost sign his order for him. It's so very hard to get an order by mail anyhow, that, if you fall short of doing all in your power, in any respect, you run good chances of losing the much coveted order.

Trusting we have made ourselves clear; that the suggestions may be of some value to you; and that you may meet with the very best of success possible, we remain

Yours very truly,

THE SALES LETTER BUREAU.